

THE PROMOTION

BY
JOHN M. DEAN





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The Promotion

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A Story of the Philippine War

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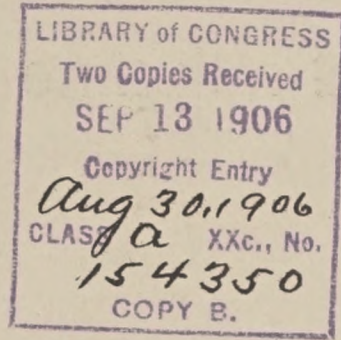
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"The Cross of Christ in Bolo-Land," etc.



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TO
THAT SEATTLE CHURCH

WHICH TOOK OFFERINGS FOR
HOME AND FOREIGN
MISSIONS
FIFTEEN MINUTES AFTER
ORGANIZATION
THIS STORY IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

FOREWORD

HERE is my only place to say the proper word befitting each ministerial venture into the realm of fiction. I hope to obtain the sympathy of some of my readers by frankly admitting that, tired of the antagonistic treatment accorded the great enterprises of the kingdom of Christ in the current fiction of the day, I made bold to use such odds and ends of time as a busy pastorate afforded, to indicate to those who have more genius for such a task than I, the ranking importance of our greatest theme—the War of the Cross against the Sin of the World. May the time soon come when American fiction may claim as its leading light some writer who dares to recognize the greatness and essential heroism of missions.

THE AUTHOR.


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I

A PASSIONATE SON OF MARS

 THE young commander dismounted from his sweating Cagayan pony and stood somberly over the awful evidence stretched out on the plaza before him. The command halted irregularly around him and silently waited, the deep breathing of the exhausted men alone breaking the dead stillness which brooded over the oven-hot Filipino town.

It is not good for a man to gaze too long upon such a sight as the dark eyes of the Senior Lieutenant fed upon—seventeen erstwhile comrades now dead, carved, slit and twisted into all imaginable positions impossible to living men, sprawled out over the brown, parched, alien sod. Yet for a full minute the officer kept his attitude, his eyes hardly noting more than the body nearest his feet, and when he spoke it was not as the men had anticipated. His voice was calm and even.

“This completes my education, Smith.”

He had addressed the junior lieutenant at his elbow, but his eyes did not lift from the hideous, distorted face of the slaughtered man at his feet.

“You hear me, Monty? The old ideals have held and hampered me long enough. For three years I have been a sentimentalist, but this is my graduation day. Turenne’s methods are mine from now on. Collins courted these vile Visayans with kindness, danced at their ‘bayles,’ played

with their brats, settled their quarrels, and tried 'benevolent assimilation' generally. And this is what he and his command got for it all. We'll begin the new course of treatment at once. Lieutenant, take a squad and round up every living Filipino in the place. Break ranks, the rest of you, and bury the dead. No, not here. Bury them under the mango trees yonder."

As the soldiers scattered in obedience, the commander, leaving his pony to the care of an orderly, passed across the plaza and into one after another of the buildings lining it.

Nerve-shaking as the gruesome plaza had been to the commander, he made discoveries in the "convento" which were even more appalling. Apparently the bolo-men had rushed the little garrison at the dinner hour, when only a fraction of the fated company was under arms, and when the first instinct of each soldier had been to rush up from the mess kitchen below into the sleeping quarters above and grasp his rifle. It was over these rifles that a terrible struggle had taken place, naked-handed Americans against the long knives of the Malays, for over and among the blood-splashed cots and lockers were the bodies of some twenty-two other victims, almost all maliciously slashed after death into an unidentifiable mass of blood, bones and cloth. The body of their commander, Collins, was only recognized by his silver bars pinned to the collar of his blouse. He had fallen beside the entrance to the guard-house, and his revolver hand had been ruthlessly hacked off, no doubt to secure a weapon which had stiffened in the dead man's grasp.

If the Visayans had suffered any in the attack, no brown bodies remained to give satisfaction to the raging hearts of the discoverers of the tragedy.

In prompt obedience to his orders, Second-Lieutenant Montaigne Smith had scoured through the radiating cross

streets and trails of the place, but all to no avail. The place was deserted of all but the American dead.

"Burn the town, then," said the commander upon hearing Smith's report. "Spare the ring of buildings around the plaza, but wipe the rest of Alcala off the map. The whole accursed place should go up in smoke; but we may have to use these inner buildings for quarters if we are ordered to remain in the puebla."

Bamboo can hardly be said to burn, for the word "burn" suggests more or less of deliberation.

It was with almost the quickness of an explosion that the tinder-like structures were destroyed, the air in the joints of the wood expanding and bursting in the heat of the red flames with a sound like that of a quick-firing machine gun. Thus accompanied, the burial party went on with its



work on the stifling plaza, overhung with inky clouds of smoke, while the Senior Lieutenant, with his orderly, rode out between blistering masses of glowing embers to the edge of the town to pick up the severed Signal Corps wire, mend the break, attach a pocket instrument, and tick a brief report of the massacre to the Brigade Headquarters at Iloilo.

"I have burned all but the inner ring of buildings about the plaza, reserving these for the use of my command. The dead are being buried. Captain Collins's body will be sent to Iloilo on a litter to-morrow. The entire region is apparently deserted. I ask permission to remain at Alcala with my detachment and endeavor to secure the punishment of the murderers."

So ended the hasty report, and the officer went back with grim face to the blackened desolation of the puebla, continuing his oversight of the burial of the bodies until the

coming of the merciful shadows of night, which, clustering under the mango trees, hid even from the light of the moon the thirty-nine hasty graves on the plaza. Then, while the new garrison, refusing the gruesome quarters of the blood-stained "convento" slept fitfully, moodily, along the transept of the smoke-blackened church, the new commandante, seated at the open window of the most pretentious of the circle of unburned houses, gazed gloomily down at the black environs of his post, dully watching the still gleaming embers showing here and there, and, impatient of the slow-moving night hours, longed for the new day, that vengeance might be visited upon the enemy.

.
A week after the massacre at Alcala the Adjutant-General at Iloilo was conversing with his superior, the Commander of the Department of the Visayas.

"Heart," he remarked between puffs of an Isabella cigar, "is a changed man. You've doubtless noticed that, General, by his reports this week. Why, you remember, sir! that man used to be one of the finest specimens of an ultra-idealist in the Army; a great theorist, you know, about humanity in modern warfare, and looked upon the Army as a sort of Central Park police force. He was always worrying about the excesses of his men, taking the side of the poor, abused Filipino, etc. But I reckon that affair at Alcala must have knocked the foolishness out of him. The way that fellow has been 'pacifying' things reminds me more of Jack Turenne than any other of our men. He's burned three 'barrios,' wiped out two bands of insurgents connected with Collins's murder, filled the old prison here with suspects, and"—the Adjutant lowered his voice and winked through the pleasant haze of tobacco smoke—"he's the hottest disciple of surreptitious water-cures that I have in my territory. We'll make a man of him yet!"

"If my memory serves me correctly, the young fellow

always has had a pretty good record. Wasn't there something said of him in the Santiago campaign?" the little General queried.

"Yes, he's the one, Herbert Heart, 'second man in the San Juan block-house,' and all that. Contributes acceptably to the *Army and Navy Journal*, too. But, General, you know as well as I do that bravery and brains alone don't make a good soldier for this kind of a proposition. If Panay is ever to be pacified, we've got to have officers who can put the screws on, and not blush when they do it, either. That look at poor Collins's men dead on the plaza taught young Heart a mighty necessary lesson. We're not fighting *men* here, General. We're fighting a slimy lot of two-faced pagans, who can't stand kindness any more than a Cuban can stand freedom."

II

GENERAL CONCEPCION'S DISGUISE



ELL, Povey, how does the town strike you?"

Heart asked the question, comfortably laid out in what had once been the most luxurious ebony chair of the village priest, his feet cocked up on the balcony rail before him. Povey, the agent for Rainier Beer, a shapeless, conscienceless, self-complacent man, as comfortable in a somewhat less pretentious chair, laughed a low and expressive commendation, while his slit-like eyes wandered over the scene before him, and recapitulated it to his shrewd mind.

Bearing in mind that the living quarters of the old Tribunal in which they were seated stood high above the plaza, and that the morning sun, a third up the sky, still left them pleasantly shaded, while the buildings opposite were flooded with its light, one can understand how comprehensive was Povey's survey. Only the houses flanking the Tribunal on either side and forming the east side of the plaza were denied him. His indolent eye raked along the northern line of buildings—the old "convento," once the home of the lordly village "padre," now a barracks for Company I; the double towers of the pueblo church, rudely carved and piously decorated with weather-beaten images. Both barracks and church were built of whitened stone, and were roofed with dilapidated red tiling. With more satisfaction he gazed across at the western front. The

mango trees interfered somewhat with the view, and the now green mounds beneath them might have troubled a more sensitive man. He hardly noted trees or graves, but allowed his eye to fall cheerfully upon the central building of the row beyond them. On its front it bore an ultra-American legend, staring enough to be easily readable where he sat—"Drink Rainier Beer While Chasing Aguinaldo." It was evidently the Post Exchange, as a group of soldiers were clustered under the rude, corrugated-iron awning in front of it. He noted with less interest its neighbors, one a Chinese restaurant, where delicacies not on the regular bill of fare at the mess could be obtained whenever the liberal prices demanded were forthcoming. The remaining structures were plainly dwelling houses of the more elaborate Visayan style, stone below, projecting stories of wooden and lattice construction above, fitted with sliding windows, and roofed with either tiling or "nipa" leaves. Completing the square, and forming its southern side, came a similar row of buildings, ragged but interesting to a novice eye, deadly monotonous to the tropic-weary garrison. Of these, two alone seemed worthy of particular attention—one because it appeared somewhat better kept than its fellows, being framed in banana and other palms, and giving evidence by the arrangement of its windows of being occupied, a sign utterly lacking elsewhere in the row, with the exception of the building immediately to its right and nearer the Tribunal, which boasted a red-cross ensign, a sentry and a corrugated-iron roof, and was evidently serving as a Post Hospital. As to the plaza itself, with the exception of the sentries at barracks and hospital, and the men lounging on its edge about the newly opened canteen and restaurant, it was utterly devoid of life. At its corners straggling trails came in from the outside, affording, by the intervals they caused

in the framing buildings, glimpses of a hideous black waste of burned bamboo beyond.

It took but an instant to review all this, and the reply of the agent to the Commandant's question came without perceptible delay.

"Why, you're picking up nicely, Lieutenant," he responded, wiping the foam of his own brand from his lips and turning his attention to an industrious line of ants which were forming an endless chain of activity from a distant corner to a puddle of beer upon the table-top at his elbow.

"What do you miss in the landscape, Povey?" inquired his host.

The agent grinned.

"Why, you're all here," he said, "Hospital, Post Exchange, Chink restaurant, comfortable quarters. The only thing I miss is the regular little brown inhabitants."

The handsome face of the officer became grim.

"They will be missing some days yet from Alcala. Drop in on your next trip and look for them again. It took me about ten days after Collins and Company M were butchered before I taught my little lesson thoroughly. We burnt the whole district up three miles each way, and I had a big string of them here—priests, presidentes, tenientes, picaninnies and Margaritas, every one of them a howling, enthusiastic 'amigo,' all only asking that they might stay in the district and be good. Why, some of them even waved little American flags down there in the plaza—little three-stripe-six-star affairs like that one over the Chink cock-pit at Iloilo. Oh, they were great pro-Americans after I 'pacified' the district."

"And you turned 'em down cold?" Povey queried.

"Did I?" The face of the Lieutenant grew unpleasantly tense. "I passed them in review by the graves over yonder, picked out the husky ones for the Iloilo stone-gang, gave

the spokesman the 'water-cure,' and warned the rest of them out of the district. Turenne is to the north of me with that holy terror of a detachment of his. I reckon that between us we are filling up the tall timber."

"Well, it sure looks queer to see a Filipino town without any Filipinos in it," said Povey judicially. "I should think you'd need a few to do the rough work."

"Chinamen do it better. In the two months I've been here we've imported a dozen or more from Iloilo, besides 'Hong Kong,' my boy. And I've acquired a Spanish outfit over there next to the hospital. The man of the outfit is quite an interesting old copy of Don Quixote, and was, I understand, the Governor of Iloilo Province in Spanish days. He lived here up to the evacuation of the island by their forces, then went with them to Jolo, but after our occupation came back to Iloilo, and now is up here again to use that old piece of property of his, the only thing he has left. I'm glad we happened to spare that row when we burned the town, for the Don is good company. There's the usual Señora, too, fat and 'garlicky,' and a Mercedes who made quite a stir, I hear, at the 'bayles' at Jaro."

At this juncture Povey was tempted to open up some typical army stories of sex, but knew his man too well to risk a chill. Turenne made a good partner at pruriency, but Heart had a different look and a different reputation, and the agent stuck to the beaten path.

"But I'll swear I saw a young 'Khakiak' around here this morning." The Lieutenant conceded the truth of the observation.

"You're right. There is just one Filipino in Alcala. When you've seen him you've seen all. Had to have *him*. Smith and I are good enough at the Spanish, but when it comes to Visayan, all we can muster is *tubig* and *palay*. Our one lone Filipino is an interpreter, a mighty bright man, and manages Spanish, patched English, French, Visayan,

and Tagalog. He's a surly fellow. That's why we like him. No more 'amigo' business for us. Smith picked him up somewhere. *Patricio!*"

The Lieutenant had raised his voice and thrown it back into the recesses of the Tribunal. Almost instantly a step was heard, and there appeared at their backs a Visayan, rather tall for his race, and with unusual strength in his features, which were regular and firm, and crowned by a stiff pompadour of glossy black hair, "á la Aguinaldo." He was dressed in a neat suit of white, and stood attentively listening while his chief gave some routine instructions concerning the translation of a proclamation to be issued in the district. Once or twice, as the Lieutenant proceeded, his black eyes flashed in quick apprehension, but for the most part his face was unreadable.

The Lieutenant soon finished.

"And make it plain, Patricio, for your people's sake. Don't soften it, or you will make trouble for them. Every time that wire is cut, tell them that another 'barrio' will be burned."

A "Si, Señor," from Patricio ended the interview, and the interpreter withdrew noiselessly.

"He's a pretty sturdy specimen, Lieutenant," commented Povey, as they resumed their positions. "Does he sleep in the quarters here? I suppose you know how some of those people feel about the hope of sticking a knife into you?"

The officer smiled scornfully.

"Yes, we keep him at the back, but the risks are too great for him—Smith and I both in the front here, the Doctor on the side, Hong Kong in a rear room, right opposite him, and the sentry down stairs, to say nothing of running the outposts afterward. No, he'll be good. Hong Kong! clear this stuff away."

Heart's servant, a worldly-wise China boy, who had been

with him in several campaigns, came slapping across the floor in his sandals, and removed the tray with its bottles and glasses.

Conversation languished, and the two men had fallen into a silent contemplation of the plaza, when a sharp ring of the telephone brought the commander quickly to the receiver.

"Our outposts are connected by telephone," he explained briefly to his guest, and then, decisively, into the mouthpiece, "All right. Join you inside of fifteen minutes."

Hanging the receiver with a snap, he disappeared into a side door, emerging an instant later with hat and revolver belt.

"Monty has picked up a Filipino outfit with his field glass. He says they are approaching on the San Blas road. Make yourself at home, Povey, and I'll go out and help him play 'Robin Hood and the High Sheriff of Nottingham.' Farewell."

The young officer disappeared downstairs and soon reappeared, crossing the dusty plaza. He again disappeared into the cool shade of the arched entrance to the barracks, and, not more than a full minute afterward, rode out with a single orderly, both mounted upon ponies and trotting sharply.

Turning his face toward the hills to the north, Heart quickly left behind him the melancholy outskirts of Alcala, and found himself with relief winding through the unscarred hills toward the Rio Verde. Closely within the promised fifteen minutes, he splashed across its shallow ford, and rode up into a grove of bamboos on its northern bank, checking his eager little mount with his left hand, and with his right carelessly returning the salute of a half-dozen soldiers who sprang up around him—Lieutenant Montaigne Smith's patrol, who, with their ponies back in the heavy growth, had been lying expectantly facing a clearing beyond the

grove over which the trail from San Blas came straight and unobstructed toward them.

While his orderly led his own and his commander's pony away into the brush, Heart dropped in the grass at the side of his sub-lieutenant.

"Pretty soon, now?" he asked, loosening his revolver and revolving its cylinder to assure himself that it was properly loaded.

"Any moment, Lieutenant," answered Monty, always eager and now plainly excited. "But I don't think there is a chance of a shot."

"Where's the exhibit?"

"Here it is, sir. Macklin took it off a Filipino crossing the ford here an hour after sunset last night, as I reported to you. The man tried to escape, but Macklin potted him against the sky-line with a shot in the heart."

Heart took from his brother officer a crumpled piece of paper, which, stretched out, revealed a few Spanish sentences:

"Comrades of the Republica Filipina! Our most illustrious and courageous General, José Concepcion—"

"Old Concepcion, eh!" ejaculated the reader delightedly.

"José Concepcion will pass through your districts on his way to arouse and inspire our troops in the Province of Antigué. Owing to the dangers to which he is subjected, he will assume a disguise of which the bearer will tell you. Let all loyal Filipinos prepare him such hospitality and assistance as he may require, thus continuing him in his labors in behalf of our ever-victorious cause.

"(Signed) MONASTERIO, Adjutant,"

"May the stars of fortune smile on us this once," laughed the commander of Alcala, wiping the perspiration from his face.

"You think I'm right, then, in my surmise that the dis-

guise will be that of a woman?" queried Monty, anxiously leveling his field glass at a patch of white now showing up the San Blas trail.

"Hardly a doubt of it," said Heart slowly. "He knows we don't war much against women in this district. I wish, however, that Macklin's aim had been poorer. If he had only winged that insurgent despatch-bearer we might have gotten the matter of the disguise out of him. But my faith in your theory is strong, Monty. Old Concepcion is probably hard pressed around Dumangas, and is cutting across to the mountains. Have you patrols on the other roads?"

"Dulaney is to the westward with a squad, and Castells at the east ford, but I'm convinced, sir, that the General intends to trust to his disguise and travel through Alcala. Gives him a chance to brag afterward about bearding 'the lion in his den,' etc., you know." Smith smiled excitedly, never lifting his glass from the trail. "Here, sir, you can make it out clearly now."

Heart took the instrument and swept the country to the north. At last he located the nick in the green hill a mile in advance against the sky, through which the trail wound toward him.

Perhaps a third of the distance from the cut to his own position, he made out the approaching outfit, a single native "kilos," with a white-clad driver and a suggestion of color in the windows of its cab. It was coming quite slowly, but nevertheless, whirled a heavy cloud of dust from its wheels.

Heart searched it keenly. Then he smiled cheerfully.

"My faith increases," he said softly. "Pass the word not to fire under any circumstances. If I remember aright, Jeff Davis was captured in a woman's togs: why not General José Concepcion, the noted insurgent cutthroat, etc., Monty?"

Eight more eager minutes, and the unsuspecting driver urged his ragged pony into the grateful shelter of the bamboos on the Rio Verde, the wheels of the "kilos" creaking dismally in the sand.

"Now, men!" shouted Monty, and the game was bagged.

Even stolid Filipino blood is stirred by the apparition of a half-dozen grim men suddenly rising out of the earth, and the "cochero" shrank in terror as Corporal Kleinstuk jerked him from his box, and, with a half-automatic motion, born of long experience, ran his hand up and down the Visayan's back to discover the presence of a hidden bolo beneath the "piña" shirt.

A cry of terror had come from one of the figures in the "kilos," a cry so truly feminine that Heart, as he stepped forward to inspect the occupants, knew there was no possible sex disguise in her case, and looked up expectantly to the second figure, seated opposite her, receiving thereby the greatest surprise of his life. He found himself gazing into the smiling face of an American woman, a face, too, of undoubted youth and modest beauty.

Having prepared himself to find a cunningly disguised but recognizable likeness of slippery old Concepcion, we cannot blame him for the comical look of amazement with which he saw, not a pair of evasive black eyes, but a pair of steady gray ones; not a wrinkled mahogany skin, but one clear almost to the verge of pallor, and holding a tinge of excited red in the cheeks; not a twisted wig of black, pompadoured hair, but a most wonderfully genuine crown of almost golden brown.

She was smiling as he began his scrutiny, but he awoke to conventionalities with a start when her smile gave place to a decidedly indignant expression, and her voice broke into the awkwardness in a cold, "I beg your pardon, sir," which had a most proper effect upon him. The amazement left

his countenance, and his corded hat swept from his head in an instant.

"I most earnestly crave yours, madam," he said, smilingly. "My surprise is my only excuse for the stare. I was anticipating a meeting with my old enemy, General Concepcion."

He did not say that he had not seen the face of an American woman for six long months, and thus might be entitled to lenity.

"But surely not in a woman's dress, sir," her voice still retaining its chill.

The men gathered respectfully about the "kilos" as the officer explained the situation, their battered hats clutched in their hands, and their heads bared in reverence at the overwhelming picture of a charming white-clad American woman on the dangerous trail of Alcala. Even Kleinstuk's hold on the "cochero" relaxed, and that individual squatted sullenly in the edge of the bamboos, chewing betel-nut.

A peal of fearless laughter marked the end of the humble hero's explanation, a signal for a general round of grins on the part of the discomfited patrol.

"Concepcion must have taken the western trail or deferred his visit," ended up the commander of Alcala. "And now, if you will allow us the convenience of your name, Miss ——?"

"Duval," she supplied.

"Thank you. And now, Miss Duval, we will escort you to such poor quarters as we possess at Alcala, and after you have refreshed yourself and your companion from the heat of your journey, you must permit us to catechize you concerning the risks you are running by traveling on these dangerous trails without escort."

His last words contained a suggestion of reproof, and she endeavored to bow gravely in assent, but succeeded poorly, a smile struggling through as she thought again of his

discomfiture. As the "cochero" scrambled up again to his place and the "kilos" started splashing across the stream, she leaned across to her still puzzled Visayan companion, and explained the situation to her in Spanish. Heart and Smith, riding ahead of their precious convoy, and the patrol coming after, sheepishly heard both women laugh musically but unrestrained, as the lumbering vehicle clambered up over the bank and fairly took the trail to Alcala.

Corporal Kleinstuk and Private Macklin, detailed to remain behind until relieved, stood in the bamboos and followed their luckier comrades and the dainty figure in white with wistful eyes.

"Wan of thim new women nurses up from Iloilo?" suggested the latter softly, as though under the spell of pleasant thoughts.

"Like enough, bunky." Kleinstuk also spoke as with an effort. "Though what she's doin' out here travelin' these trails without any escort excepting that Filipino woman is more than I sabé. Wisht I was a 'shave-tail' myself, Mack. Think of us havin' to dessicate in ninety degrees here, while the Lieutenant sits in the shade with her this afternoon and passes her a fancy brand of vino!"

"Envy him not, ye Dootchmon," responded his partner, still watching the last point on the opposite bank of the Verde, where the "kilos" had been visible. "If I know anything about the faces of me fellow mortals, and I've been stoodying thim for mony's the year, oor dashin' C.O., Lef-tinent Herbert Heart, is soon to be an object of great coom-passion to the hull of us."

III

THE HERO CROSSES SWORDS WITH A WOMAN



OMPANY I, awe-struck and curious as a girls' boarding-school, had seen with satisfaction the final disposition of the unexpected guest. The "kilos" had been driven directly to the home of the afore-mentioned Spanish family, and Miss Duval and her companion were made welcome in the hospitable fashion characteristic of the true Castilian. Don Rodrigo, ex-Governor of Iloilo Province, a man both modest and able, whose only dissipation was chess, and whose only weakness an attempt to link a really ancient ancestry with the glory of the famous Pelayo of the Eighth Century Asturian Kingdom, received with a genuine demonstration of pleasure the fair "Americana," and even assigned her companion, a bright Visayan woman, to an apartment with all his graciousness of manner. In this he was fairly equalled by his wife, who, true to the Commander's description, was typically fat and "garlicky." Her good-natured and motherly reception of her guest was the warmer when she found herself able to use her own beautiful language in talking with her. Mercedes, the slender antipode of her mother's figure, shyly joined in the greeting as the officers, bowing their adieux at the gate, rode over to the Tribunal.

Here word awaited them that General Concepcion had

been reported as back in the hills north of Dumangas, where he was being hard-pressed by a detachment of scouts from Turenne's command.

"All our trouble for nothing," commented Monty.

"Hardly as bad as that, old fellow," laughed his senior, looking steadily at his friend. "It looks to me as though we had made the capture of our careers."

"Who do you think she is, anyway?" asked the junior officer, blunt eagerness in his voice. "Povey gave me the names of that new detachment of nurses who have just come down on the *Warren*, assigned to the Brigade Hospital. I'm sure 'Duval' wasn't one of them. Anyhow, they'd never let them wander around the country without escort. She must belong to the civilian outfit, but she certainly had the poise of a general's daughter. If Povey hadn't lit out for Jaro we might have pumped him."

"Poise is a good word, Monty. She had so much of it that I deferred the satisfying of my curiosity and the expression of my indignation at her foolhardiness until after 'siesta' hour. Is Doc here yet?"

"Washing up at the back. Since he heard the news of our capture he has been skulking around for clean clothes and a razor."

"Wise man," laughed Heart. "I follow suit after lunch. Let's see what Hong Kong has for us."

As the China-boy brought in the light noon-lunch the two officers prepared themselves by stripping off their close khaki jackets, throwing their leggings into a corner and loosening the kerchiefs about their necks, for it was a stifling day. While thus engaged the post doctor came in from the wash-platform in the rear.

When Heart had secured the assignment of his old friend, Jim Hilton, as acting assistant surgeon at Alcala, he had had in mind not merely the medical needs of Company I, but his own need of congenial companionship as

well. Back in the old college days, when they were both working their way through the expense of the curriculum by a hundred desperate expedients, they had shared a room in the weather-beaten old dormitory, and had been inseparable until the parting of the ways had led Heart to an art institute in Pittsburgh, and Hilton into Ann Arbor's medical department. The strong tides of the Spanish-American War had brought them into the common service, and the steady, cheerful, studious little doctor, near-sighted, firm-mouthed, open-hearted, was now furnishing Heart almost the only alleviation of a life which, with all the glamor of its military trappings, he felt and knew to be both narrow and hardening.



DR. JIM.

Hilton had obtained but a glimpse of the garrison's guest, but it had driven him to the lather cup and a clean outfit, and he formed a decided contrast to his unkempt brethren.

"The Post Hospital at Alcala needs the inspecting eye of a woman," he murmured cheerfully, between his beans and his coffee.

"I shall be glad to have visitors on the plaza at 'retreat,'" supplemented Smith.

"All this will be kept in mind by a benevolent superior officer," said Heart.

A few minutes finished the meal, and the three men went in as many directions, the doctor to his little dispensary, Smith to his cot to make up for the sleep lost through his night's scouting, and Heart likewise to a cot, not to take the usual "siesta," but to lie out-stretched upon the cane-weave of the Filipino bed and stare ruminatingly up into the thatched "nipa" of the roofing. The deadness of the withering noon hours had fallen upon the entire garrison,

and thus, with hardly a sound to disturb his mental processes, he gave himself willingly over to a rapid review of his feminine ideals.

The commander of Alcala was one of those men whose outward manner might at times verge on the careless, or even frivolous, but the current of whose inner life runs deep and grave. Only those admitted into his inner life (and they were few, indeed, in number), even approximately understood him, and realized even in part the essential earnestness of the man. A "sinner," in the conventional sense, Heart had found himself rapidly becoming as he followed the almost irresistible tendencies of garrison life, and even a sinner above his fellows. From the memorable moment in his career when he had gazed at the butchered, tortured bodies of Collins's command, and had left behind him forever, as he believed, the more boyish ideals of his military life, he had drifted into a mental attitude which soon affected his moral judgment, and such acts as the indiscriminate destruction of native houses, the harrying even of women and children from his district, and the use of torture to extract information from prisoners no longer troubled his conscience. Whereas a few months before he had gravely contributed an article to the *Army and Navy Journal* on "The Spirit of Chivalry in Modern Warfare," he now felt a grim satisfaction in subjecting captured insurgents to the "thumb-test," the "sweat-box," and the "water-cure." Although entering the Army from civilian life, he had brought with him the military ardor and honor of an ancestry of volunteer soldiers. But his conception of the ideal soldier as a man of high, almost Quixotic moral life, was rapidly disintegrating, and the lower and more dangerous conception of a hard-swearing, unpretending, blunt, masterful, hard-fighting commander had vaguely erected itself and claimed his gradual allegiance. But to one element of this old army ideal he had not yet

brought himself to assent. Always an idealist concerning women, and having constantly fed the fire upon the altar of his ideal love by a devotion to such poetry as Goethe's love lyrics, Keats's throbbing verse-confessions, and Cartier's "Lines to a Maiden," he was utterly unable to follow in the footsteps of many a dashing junior and grizzled, knowing senior, and utilize a woman as a tool of cheap passion. No, not even though the woman might be of an alien race or a depraved life.

The usual religious sensitiveness of the adolescent age had left no convictions of duty Godward strong enough to resist a general deterioration of the high moral concepts of his college and art life, but the very instinct of self-preservation seemed to save for him the pure fancies and untarnished hopes of a radiant love to come. Unable, being of finite mind, to avoid incarnating his fancies in visible form, he had at first gradually, and then automatically, drawn the coming queen of his life in the dark lines of a tropical fancy—a half-French, half-Italian ideal. More than once he had tried to project her upon canvas, and it was always the darker hues from which he borrowed her hair and eyes. He had caught a hint of her now and then, he felt, in some face upon a busy street, or some figure in a passing carriage, and he had often followed for blocks a woman utterly strange to him whose form seemed to promise the fair one of his solitary musings. But always these hints were thrown from some "slight and slender" brunette, hair black or blue-black, brows well lined, and eyes intense. His experience with his dreams has had its partial parallel in many a clean man's thinking, and, as he stretched out upon his creaking cot and revolved his dearest visions rapidly in mind, he smiled ruefully as he thought of the heart-thrills of his morning adventure, and the contrast between the dark beauty of his psychological experiences and the reality of Miss Duval's steady gray eyes.

How Love makes himself known is a mystery forever untold. But the rare strain of candid simplicity in the Lieutenant's character was already suggesting to him that it was more than possible that, after a merely eager inspection of women, civilian and army, American and foreign, throughout college, art, and military life—that, after all, this mere processioning, this vague hoping, wondering and constant disappointing, the one who was to draw his heart forever after hers had come to him this very day along the dusty trail to Alcala. It was with something of a religious reverence that the man recognized this possibility of his Day of Visitation, and had he followed the impulse of his quickening heart he would have burst out into a song of gratitude that the spring time of his heart-life seemed to be nearing.

At four o'clock, the earliest possible hour in Don Rodrigo's easy-going home, the Commandant of Alcala found himself *tete-à-tete* with Miss Duval. The Don and his family were grouped around the generous Hilton at the opposite end of the spacious "sala," drawn into convulsive laughter by the Doctor's latest assaults on the Spanish. Smith was to drop in later. The Filipina companion of Miss Duval was nowhere to be seen.

The usual courtesies had followed the entrance of the officers and their formal presentation, and Heart held a cup of black chocolate in his hand as he began, with outward assurance, but much inward quaking, the leading questions of the conversation.

"You will pardon my catechism, Miss Duval, but are you of the Army Nurses' Corps?"

"I have not that honor," she said quietly as she gave him her full attention and released her cup to the Chinese servant. "I would have satisfied your evident curiosity this morning had you not been so very willing to allow Inez and myself our 'siesta' first. No, my companion and my-

self are both missionaries, Lieutenant, of the Evangelical Mission at Jaro."

"A missionary, Miss Duval?" There was something sharper than surprise in his voice. In spite of his deepening admiration of the charming face before him, he could not eliminate a trace of disappointment. "Have the missionaries already begun their propaganda in Panay?"

She read him with a woman's quickness, but answered gently. "Yes, it is very nearly a year now since our mission was established in Manila, though but a few months since my brother, Dr. Davidson Duval, opened up a station at Jaro, adjoining the 'mercado.'"

"And what does your brother mean," he asked sternly, "by dragging you into such a hopeless and dangerous enterprise? Why do I find you traveling unprotected in a hot-bed of ladronism? What must I think of your brother's religion when he allows his sister to behave in this reckless fashion?"

The beautiful face before him showed no offense. Perhaps the note of real concern for her mitigated the effect of his words.

"Do not blame my brother, Lieutenant Heart," she said eagerly. "I am sure that I can defend both him and myself in a sentence. This journey of mine, now almost completed—for I am returning to Iloilo—was allowed me at my earnest request by General Hugelet. I even have one of those little green 'sedulas' in my traveling bag, signed and countersigned. My companion, Inez, has recently attached herself to our mission, and accompanies me because of my limited knowledge of Visayan. My object was to secure a translator and competent instructors. I understood this could be done at Cabatuan, but I was disappointed. My brother was quite ill with the 'dengue' and unable to go himself. I was escorted the entire distance from Iloilo to Cabatuan by patrols, and for that very rea-

son was anxious to return by this less frequented route. I cannot with good conscience cause so much extra patrolling on the part of men who have full duties without escorting voluntary travelers. Besides, as my work here is to be among the Filipinos, I did not wish to give them the idea that I was identified with the military and thus, of course, partially alienate them."

"I hope that our poor hospitality at Alcala will not entirely destroy your influence with our enemies," he said rather stiffly.

"Don't, I beg of you, speak so," exclaimed the young missionary, a note of real remorse in her voice. "I have already thanked you for the hospitality of this delightful old Castilian family and the kind attention shown to us here. In a moment I am going to ask for the privilege of continuing my journey to the coast this evening, but it is anxiety for my brother that prompts the request. I should enjoy staying a day longer in Alcala and getting to know a little of your command. You know my people were soldiers. I love my country and our Army. My heart thrills with every bugle call. But oh, Lieutenant, I can hardly hope you will understand me when I say that it is *because* I love my country that I have come to give the best gift in my country's possession to this poor, childish, weak race. Will it not be the part of a patriot to give to this people the pure, untainted message of Christ's love as given in the Bible that the priests are withholding, and then try to exemplify that love by healing their bodies and developing their minds? I am getting quite used to the army view-point of Christian missions, but oh, that you men could be brought to see that as high a call has come to me to proclaim my message to this people as to you faithfully and mercifully to administer your district!"

"Miss Duval," responded the young officer, flushing, "do not talk of mercy in Alcala. Look out of your window

at those graves under the mango trees. There was a time when I could prate about parental care of a childish people, but I have found that it is judgment and not mercy that these wily Malays need."

He hesitated a moment, and then, conscious of a traitor tenderness for her, compelled himself to assume a peremptory tone.

"Do not be surprised that, with all my reverence for womanhood and my necessary homage to your bravery in following out your convictions at no little risk to yourself, I still cannot but deeply resent your mission to Panay. Here is the American Army in a hard and trying foreign experience. Its soldiers are many of them mercilessly butchered by a foe that knows no law of civilized warfare. Disease reinforces the boloes of a treacherous people and fills our divisional hospitals. Yet you, an American woman, a product of our highest traditions, can not only ignore a large possible ministry in alleviating the sufferings of our men and cheering them with a woman's sympathy, but come to mock us by talk of converting the torturers of our comrades. It cannot astonish you that some of us grieve at the spectacle of a wasted ministry to a vicious people."

She had involuntarily risen from her chair as he concluded, and he was compelled to follow her example. Her face was pale and her eyes glowed. The movement drew the attention of the group at the opposite end of the "sala," and, vaguely conscious of something unpleasant, they were approaching the missionary and the officer. She noticed their approach, but replied deliberately to him with a spirit that surprised him.

"You have doubtless been in these islands for months, if not years, Lieutenant Heart. My own experience is quite limited, but I wish to say to you that your estimate of the Filipino people is singularly distorted. They are cruel, but they are also tender. They are deceitful, but they

are often faithful. They are generous as well as treacherous. Briefly, sir, they are but children, revengeful, passionate, changeable. Those virtues of which you unconsciously boast yourself over them are the fruitage of true Christian teaching—a teaching that you would deny to them. But, even though this people were all that you say, I should not let your words influence me toward a disobedience of the One whom I serve, he who said, ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.’ ”

* * * * *

At ten in the evening the position of the commanding officer of Alcalá's garrison was clearly marked to the eye of the sentry in the plaza below by the winking light of his cigar, as he sat in silence on the balcony of his quarters and stared moodily out into the moonlight. All the inviting softness of the night could not allure him from a repeated and irritating mental review of his encounter with Miss Duval five hours earlier. With kaleidoscopic changes from self-justification to self-condemnation, he went through an inferno of alternating emotions. The bitter end of a third cigar proved the concentration of his mind, and it was only with a decided effort that he brought himself to listen to the sound of rapid riding on the north road.

“Post No. 3 has challenged,” he thought languidly, as the noise of hoof-beats and the distant jingle of accoutrements stopped and then began again. A moment later three horsemen trotted out into the plaza and a resonant voice called up:

“Hello there! That you, Heart? What in the name of Expansion are you sitting there in the dark for? We’ve come all the way over from San Blas to see the fair guest of Alcalá.”

Heart laughed shortly.

“You didn’t expect an illumination and a ‘bayle’ in honor

of a little anti-beer, anti-card-playing missionary, did you, Turenne?"

The tallest of the three riders gave a low whistle.

"So *that* was her role! She went through our town to-day on the strength of one of old Hugelet's passes. We got her name, but nothing else. This *is* one on me. But, say, can't we get a look-in anyhow?"

"You've lost again. She went on to Tig-bauan under escort four hours ago. Have the orderly put your horses up and come up here and drown your sorrows."

Two of the dim figures below laughingly dismounted, while the third, evidently an orderly, led their horses over toward the "corral." A moment later the lights in the Tribunal flashed up, and revealed the new-comers' features as they ascended the stairs to enjoy Heart's liquid hospitality. The shorter of the two was dressed in civilian clothes, but crowned with a campaign hat and armed with a revolver. His face, partly concealed by a curly black beard, still furnished evidence, to even a superficial glance, of both strength and ability. The dark eyes were somewhat restless, however, and even the kerosene lights did not fail to reveal the distended veins in the purpled cheeks and nose. The tall man—unusually tall—was in a lieutenant's uniform, and was armed like his fellow. His smooth-shaven face gave opportunity for a better inventory than was possible in his friend's case. The prominent and hawk-like nose, the drawn muscles at the corners of the firm, hard mouth, the level brows and high forehead, the keen blue eyes, and the bold locks of black hair—these marked him as a man of striking and compelling personality. Of all the young officers of the Ninth Separate Brigade, Jack Turenne was the most impudently handsome. But he, too, gave unpleasant evidence of reckless living in the too-rigid lines of an otherwise youthful face.

Spinning his corded hat upon the table with the assurance

of a frequent visitor, he introduced his companion to Heart as "my old friend Whitney, special correspondent for the *Greater American*," and sprawled into a chair with a sigh of discontent.

"So no Bright-Eyes for us to-night, eh? Think of riding twelve miles to see a missionary! But, after all, she was worth the trouble, Heart, for Beauty is her name in spite of her dubious occupation. Call Smith and Hilton and let's try to forget our woe."

"Smith went with her escort. Hilton will be over from the barracks shortly. We won't wait for him, however. Hong Kong! Bring in that case of whiskey Povey brought up this morning, *pronto*."

Thus the night began in earnest. A little past midnight, when Hilton left the cot of a sick man at the barracks and started for his quarter, he was saluted, as he emerged from the entrance, by a roaring drinking-song from over the plaza, a song so lustily shouted in the upper story of the Tribunal that it bade fair to awaken the whole command.

"Turenne is here again, curse him," he meditated. "Alcala is surely getting cosmopolitan. An Angel visits us in the afternoon and the Devil arrives at night. And the worst of it is that the C. O. quarrels with the Angel and fraternizes with the Devil. I wonder if the quarrel hasn't something to do with the song!"

Then Doctor Jim, being of a neat and quiet sort, turned back to the orderly room of the barracks and sought a humble cot in that retired place for the night, being lulled to sleep by faint echoes of a stentorian trio from the Head-quarter's windows:

You've only one life to live, my boy,
So live it with all your might,
E'en though you have to cut a slice
Right out of the middle of night, ho! ho!
Right out of the middle of night!

IV

A BLUE LEAF OF HEALING



HE inevitable pitiless sun was searching with fiery fingers through every possible crevice in the architecture of the Tribunal as Heart, with parched mouth and aching head, bade a dull farewell to his companions of the night's carouse, and doggedly pulled out a bunch of company papers from his writing desk. Turenne had come through the test of the night with hardly a jangling nerve to trouble him as he rode back toward San Blas, and even Whitney sat jauntily in his saddle as he braved the hot road. But the young commander had not been able to imitate them in their late morning sleep of four hours. He had passed through the drinking, the singing, and the following hours with the prospect of either a drunken stupor or honest sleep becoming more and more remote. Drinking far more than his companions, he had yet been unable to lose the possession of his faculties for an instant, and, though he sang as loudly as they, through both drinks and songs a woman's face had haunted and accused him—a face in which the absence of all accusation constituted his greatest torture, the firm, sweet, earnest face of the young missionary.

When the last glasses had been emptied, Hong Kong had helped the journalist and Turenne to their cots, where they

had snored ponderously and leadenly until the middle of the forenoon. But the fair visitant's face had robbed Heart even of a desire to sleep, and he had sat alone at the abandoned table while the lamp-light blended into the glare of the morning sun. When at length his companions had eaten a hasty breakfast, he had found himself unable to join them at the food, and, noting this, Hong Kong now slipped a huge cup of coffee on to the edge of the desk. Heart sipped it as he opened up a file of documents and looked up inquiringly as Hong Kong re-appeared and placed at the saucer's edge a dainty blue envelope.

Heart stared uncertainly at it a moment, and then, with a prophetic thrill of glad interest, he read the address upon its face, written in a quaint little feminine hand:

"Lieutenant Herbert Heart, U. S. Army. District Commander."

"What can she have written me?" he mused, hesitating to open the missive lest it contain some added reminder of his boorishness of the previous day. "Has she suggested an apology for my heated attack upon her profession, or has she simply sent me an added argument for her side of the controversy?"

She had done neither. He read with growing tenderness.

"Being of an old Army family, Lieutenant, and having met at my old home many of our officers who have bravely hazarded all for country's sake, I feel that I should frankly write you that I rejoice in your devotion to the Flag. I do not hold it against you at all that you should resent what to you was no doubt a strange and un-American attitude. May I not say that both my brother and myself have heard of your chivalrous conduct in the Cuban campaign through common acquaintances in Iloilo? I pray that I may be as utterly, as fearlessly devoted to the cause I represent as you have shown yourself to be to the cause of your country—my

country, please, as well. My brother will greatly appreciate your hospitality to me and the furnishing of the escort to Tig-bauan.

Very sincerely,

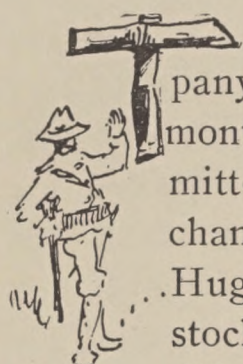
GRACE DUVAL."

His hand shook as he raised the paper reverently to his lips. Not until he read its lines of peace and kindness had he realized how heart-sick he had been since he had strode stiffly away from Don Rodrigo's the previous afternoon, leaving an uncomfortable group of friends standing disconcerted in the old Spaniard's home. Feverish and haggard, and hungry at heart, already feeling that she had awakened something within him dangerously near to love, and yet fearing that he had disgusted her thoroughly by his blunt and discourteous manner, he had begun the letter in nervous apprehension of an added sting to conscience. Its healing sentences came to him with a gratefulness that made him utterly forget his burning eyes and throbbing head, and brought out all his real, inner, frank manliness in a flash.

"May God bless her!" he said fervently, folding the sheet and placing it in his blouse pocket. "May God keep her! I think I shall be honest enough to admit to myself that, missionary or no missionary, I am from this day forward the servant of my country and of Miss Grace Duval."

V

THE LITTLE GENERAL NOTES A CHANGE



THREE months passed in review before Company I at Alcala—a month of withering heat, a month of dust, and a month of drumming, intermittent rains. It was during one of the rapid sky-changes of the third month that General Mercer Hugelet, accompanied by Staff Captain Krug and stocky, red-faced Chaplain Tully, flashed into Alcala on one of his famous lightning inspections of his scattered garrisons, and looked down from the balcony of the Tribunal upon a humid but sun-lit scene.

No click of telegraph or beat of hoof had preceded him in warning. Nevertheless, he found great satisfaction in the things which his eye rested upon, and the multitudinous sounds which throbbed up to his ear from the plaza, as he seated himself in the wicker-chair pushed forward by Dr. Hilton. Even the taciturn Krug wrinkled his stolid German face into a smile of kindly approval as he sat at his chief's side and began to pull on a truly Bavarian pipe. Tully nodded sleepily in a chair behind the two. Heart was out on road inspection, but Smith and Hilton had done the honors in good form, and the little, sharp-eyed general was too old a campaigner not to appreciate the several little courtesies that the two subalterns had modestly offered.

But it was the plaza sights and plaza sounds which cheered him most.

Below him stretched row upon row of bamboo booths, with a swarming, weaving mass of Filipinos, ebbing, flowing and clustering in the narrow aisles between them. With the exception of one or two places where large puddles of water still remained from a recent downpour, the whole square was given over to the cheerful, gossiping crowd. The general had spent over two years now in the islands, and he knew the various types instantly; merchants, officials, fishermen, rice farmers, mountaineers in their "sombros del monte," a priest or two, a uniformed policeman, a dandy in a black coat and white trousers, a pretty "mestizo" girl, a stolid and squat Negrito, a Spanish half-caste, an Igorrote. Children swarmed in all corners not usurped by their elders, and played among the bright-colored cloths, the grass trays of fruit, the woven baskets, and the gaudy trinkets. Dogs not a few dozed or raced as the mood seized them. Even unarmed American soldiers were mingling freely with the natives, and only the ever-alert sentries at barracks and hospital reminded an observer of the still flickering warfare on Panay. Such a scene of amity and commercial activity was doubly pleasing to the general, for his naturally humane disposition had been reinforced of late by strenuous demands from Manila for reports showing a "pacified" island and progress in civil administration. The Anti-Imperialists at home were getting unpleasantly active in politics, and the McKinley administration must be vindicated in its "benevolent assimilation" program. The general had been worried a good deal in his review of conditions in Turenne's district at San Blas and Wilson's territory around Passi. But here at Alcala was a cheering sight, and he was already formulating a report in which Lieutenant Heart was to be mentioned with honor. He was the more delighted because the last reports of

Heart's work had given him the impression that the district would be desolate and "raw." In fact, four months previously he had looked himself upon this same plaza, and had found it as empty as a grave yard.

Yet the general was too thoroughly of the old school of Army traditions to express himself very freely to men so many grades below him in rank as those seated with him in the old Tribunal, and, had it not been for an apology offered by Lieutenant Montaigne Smith, as he personally placed sweating glasses of iced lemonade at the elbows of the three visitors, the little general might never have heard the story of Alcala's changed policy.

"We have nothing stronger in the quarters, sir,"

Monty had said in real distress as he

fixed the general's glass into the waiting socket in the arm of the wicker-chair.

No words could have been more electric. The general withdrew his cigar from his mouth, and held it poised in most genuine surprise, while Captain Krug looked even more frankly betrayed.

"Nothing is better than a lemonade in this climate, eh,



THE OLD CHURCH ON THE PLAZA.

doctor?" said the general smilingly, after a pause, but there was no great warmth in his voice. "Did—er—did your commissary break down?"

"Why, no, General Hugelet," Hilton broke in desperately. "The fact is the whole garrison is on the water wagon."

"Somewhat unusual, is it not?" inquired the department commander courteously. "I know what you medical men say, however, and I presume that you are experimenting for purposes of health and efficiency."

"Well, no, sir," said Hilton in some confusion. "I can't claim any credit for the move myself, but Lieutenant



A NATIVE CONSTABLE

Heart has inaugurated a radical change of policy in the garrison and district, and the elimination of alcohol was merely one of the incidents of the new régime. It began over at the barracks. The men had been getting riotous on pay day at the Rainier beer agency, and they had also begun to smuggle in a good deal of native 'vino.' Lieutenant Heart closed up the agency, shut down on the 'vino,' and then he thought it was only the square thing to follow suit here in Officers' Quarters. Smith

and myself were willing enough, for we are not tied up to the habit. It was rather more of a wrench on Lieutenant Heart himself, I think. We all feel rather at a loss on our guests' account, sir."

"Don't worry," said the general, who was finding the lemonade a better drink than he had dared to hope. "Tell me about this 'new régime.' I confess that your district is progressive of late and highly pleasing to us at Headquarters. How did it come about, doctor?"

Hilton's face lit with a real enthusiasm.

"If it won't bore you, general, I should be delighted to

comply," he began eagerly. "You doubtless know, sir, that a few months ago we were pretty busy here hunting down the murderers of Captain Collins and the men of Company M, and even after we had succeeded in bringing most of them to justice, we continued a decidedly repressive policy throughout the entire 'pueblo.' Among other measures, we destroyed the greater part of this town and a number of 'barrios,' and forbade even non-combatant Filipinos a residence in Alcala. We may have gone too far in that and other directions. At any rate, some three months ago, Lieutenant Heart very suddenly reversed his policy, and issued a proclamation throwing open the district to all peaceable natives. They have been pouring in ever since, and I'm bound to say that we are having very little trouble with them. They have pretty nearly rebuilt this and other places, and, as you see below you, the old 'mercado' is again in full blast. The church, too, has resumed its services, a tolerable native constabulary is being formed to check the ladrones, a native band has been encouraged with uniforms and a little money, and will, I trust, sir, give a simple program in your honor to-night. Some little progress has been made in civil government on a very small scale, and an election has already placed 'presidentes' and 'chiefs of barrio' in office."

"The usual measures, I see," interrupted the general. "But were there any unusual methods? It seems to me that the vigorous policy necessary here a few months ago would have left more scars than such a program as you have outlined could heal in so short a period."

"Why, yes, sir. I think the commanding officer has succeeded in getting the genuine affection of a large element of natives here by one or two rather unusual acts."

Staff Captain Krug was listening attentively. He was too strict a disciplinarian to endorse any serious departures from the usual routine. But his heart had been won a few

months ago by the young commander of Alcala, who had told him that he believed the victory of Germany over France in 1870 the most decisive in the annals of war."

"Vat ver dose unyoosual acts?" he asked in a neutral voice.

"Well, on one occasion the Spanish Bishop at Jaro sent a friar out here on some church business, and the lieutenant refused to allow him to remain, sending him back under escort to Ilolio the same day. The people here went wild over it, and bored us for a week with deputations presenting their gratitude."

"They certainly hate the friars," conceded the general cautiously, for he had received repeated instructions from the War Department to keep on the best of terms with the great Catholic Church and its ancient Orders.

"They would have murdered the fellow if he had remained, I fear. Then, too, the ladrone chief, Montor del Moro, who had been, as you know, the terror of peaceful Filipinos in this vicinity for years, was hunted down and captured. He had killed the infant son of the 'presidente' of Tig-bauan by dashing out its brains against a wall, and eight other murders were proven against him and his band of ladrones. When we hung him in the plaza below, after fair trial, there must have been 15,000 people watching and approving. You were in Samar at the time, general, but you no doubt knew of the good effect on our own and other districts. All the peaceable natives breathed easier after that event. Even the insurgent General Concepcion sent us in a note of thanks."

"Yes, that was a good stroke of policy, and better, an act of high justice," said the general with an approving nod. "It undoubtedly helped you here. Anything more?"

The doctor hesitated. No topic was more to his liking than the successes of his old schoolmate, Heart. But he feared for the reception of his next words. General Mercer

Hugelet was more of a fighter than a statesman. Heart's great hold upon the Filipinos had come from a somewhat questionable act.

"Our present tranquility in the 'pueblo'," said Hilton with sudden resolution, "is also due, I believe, to the fact that on 'fiesta' days an unusual privilege is allowed the population. As you know, sir, the Visayans are greatly attached to their three-striped flag. On the occasion of the expulsion of Friar Anselmo they came over to the Tribunal in great enthusiasm, carrying the Filipino and American flags side by side. The flying of their flag might have meant treachery, or at least presumption, but we felt that the attendant circumstances indicated quite the opposite, and did not demand that it be torn down as we formerly would have done. In fact, the lieutenant has issued an order that, while the Filipino flag is never to appear above or without an American flag, it may be placed side by side with it in 'fiesta' processions or on other special occasions. It seems to please them wonderfully, and they have displayed our own flag alone a great deal more often since the order was issued, sir."

Hilton had ended a little anxiously, but the general reassured him by gravely saying: "On the whole a wise thing, doctor, although a general order to that effect is entirely impossible. The experiment interests me, however. It has undoubtedly done you service here. Any other special matters?"

"We have opened a school," continued Hilton in relief. "Even Lieutenant Smith is on the faculty, teaching English an hour a day. The enrolment is good, and we have found a fairly good Filipino 'maestro.' Then, too, we were very careful to obey your order relative to accepting gifts in deciding civil questions between Filipinos. They were greatly surprised that we took no gifts in return for petty

decisions. I think, sir, that your order lost us several good ponies and a mountain of eggs and vegetables."

The general laughed.

"That order *was* a trifle hard on you young fellows. But we had to show them the American idea of a judiciary."

By this time even Krug, the strict, was on the side of the "new régime."

"Dere iss von ting off vich you speak not," he said. "De ice in dis lemonade—vere you gedt it? Dere iss but von ice-blant in Panay, und dot iss midt us in Iloilo."

"Why, it's some of your own ice, captain," broke in Smith, who had been listening delightedly to Hilton's praise of Heart's policy. "When Lieutenant Heart began the new order for the Filipinos he didn't forget Company I. He's been petting the men with a new policy, too. Not but that he makes us work though, sir."

"Brings out this ice all the way from Iloilo in sawdust, general," said Hilton. "He began it for the benefit of a typhoid case of mine at our hospital. The ice, however, helped to lose us the beer and whiskey. When he found that he could keep the canteen supplied with iced soft drinks he banished alcohol in every shape—said it was bad for discipline."

The general winced a little at this, and Krug winked slyly at Chaplain Winfield Scott Tully, whose red face attempted to put on a deeper hue and failed.

Smith hastened to the rescue.

"The 'new régime' meant also a neat little reading room for the men, and an out-of-door gymnasium back of the barracks. We've got a pretty contented command here, sir, in spite of hard patrolling. Of course, we don't forget Captain Collins's experience here, and Lieutenant Heart keeps us ready for any emergency."

"Company I has a good record," said the general graciously. "Dr. Hilton must be keeping down malingering.

It has been with real interest that I have listened to the history of your progressive policy. It works, and therefore needs no endorsement. We are after results in Panay—suppression of the insurrection and the pacification of the island. By the by, Chaplain Tully, a vital link is missing in this Alcala program, a link that you can supply. Why not put a climax to all this altruism, and give the men a religious service to-night over at the barracks? You know, doctor (turning to Hilton), I went from a pretty stiff Presbyterian family into West Point. All this talk on reform has stirred me up. It's providential that Chaplain Tully is here to give us one of his good addresses."

At this abrupt proposal the chaplain had stared at his superior in amazement, but the little brigadier was evidently quite serious.

"I'm—I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me, general," he stammered in embarrassment. "You know I'm pretty well loaded with the care of the regimental bakery and the hospital and school duties at Iloilo. I really am—ahem—not prepared to preach to the men to-night."

"Pretty vell loaded! Dot's pretty close to de troot for Tully," chuckled Krug in an aside to Monty, who grinned appreciatively. But the general, after looking sternly at his staff officer, said kindly, as he arose and brushed the cigar ashes from his thigh: "Chaplain Tully, gentlemen, was known years ago throughout the old Army as a preacher of great ability. We have put a good deal of administrative work on him of late—too much, I fear, for he is very willing. He is certainly excused from gratifying a mere whim of mine."

As he spoke he laid his hand gently on the chaplain's shoulder, but the clergyman's eyes refused to meet his kindly glance, and he sat ill at ease and silent.

The others had risen with the general, and the interview was evidently terminated. Hilton was reaching for his hat,

and Smith was about to order up a special luncheon for the inspecting party, when the general, taking the doctor by the arm, drew him aside and said: "A private query, if you please, doctor. The evident change in conditions here since my former tour of the island four months ago leads me to wonder what caused your very sudden change of policy. Can you gratify me? Was it any one thing that led to the reversal, or merely the feeling that the time was ripe for a different procedure?"

The doctor stood for a moment non-plussed, an evident conflict in his mind. At length, with a smile, he said: "It is a question only Lieutenant Heart can fully answer, sir. But personally I attribute the change in the main to the influence of—"

He hesitated a second time.

"Well?" suggested the general.

"Well, sir, to be frank—of a woman."

If Hilton had expected the general to inquire further he was mistaken, for the only words that grizzled little soldier uttered as he turned into the room assigned him for "siesta" were: "To be sure. To be sure. I remember that 'sedula.' So she got her interpreter after all!"

VI

THE COMING OF THE BLACK-BOUND BOOK



It was ten o'clock in the evening, and Alcala was celebrating. A little group clustered in the balcony of the Tribunal to enjoy it all: Don Rodrigo, flanked by wife and daughter; Francisco Soriano, the newly installed "presidente," and two or three of his civil staff; the two local "padres," one the ascetic Najera, the other a veritable "Friar Tuck," by name Ricarte; Smith and Hilton in immaculate white; the chaplain, Krug, and in the background the grave face of Patricio, the interpreter, in readiness to build conversational bridges; in the center of all the General, in whose honor the party had gathered, with the returned Commander of Alcala back from road inspection and seated at his beloved superior's right.

As to the common people, the plaza was swarming with them, and in the center of the throng the native band disseminated good fellowship and romantic sentiment by the performance of a program of some merit. The cocoanut oil lamps on every house twinkled with a soft, inviting radiance, and the Chinese restaurant was not only transformed by a double row of swaying, gaudy lanterns, but up from its roof shot now and then the fiery spire of a rocket. Best of all, the cool, moon-filtered night air was blowing

from the darkly outlined, palmy hills, and the intoxication of the "ilang-ilang" was drifting impalpably with it.

Eleven o'clock, and the band came up under the windows of the Tribunal and essayed "The Star Spangled Banner," bringing shrill yells of approval from the soldiers seated along the barracks front, and a shower of silver from the group on the balcony. Surely all was peace at Alcala, through the favor of a woman's face.

* * * * *

Suddenly the gathering about the General became aware of a disturbance at the farther end of the plaza. A volley of angry shouts echoed shrilly above the dying strains of the band's farewell piece. For a moment the crowd of idlers below hesitated, and then surged toward the scene of conflict. A guard from the barracks ran rapidly in the same direction, and a lad—an acolyte of the local church—called up eagerly toward the balcony,

"Padre Najera! Quickly!"

Without ceremony the priest sprang up and hurried below, Smith and the Doctor only waiting to grasp their revolver belts before following him.

"The Visayans are children, quick to quarrel, your Excellency," said Soriano reassuringly to the General. "It is but a moment's difficulty. My own police will speedily settle the trouble."

Heart had remained quietly seated, but as the uproar below steadily increased and the crowd of pleasure seekers seemed suddenly transformed into a mob, swaying excitedly around a vociferous center, he turned to the eager Macklin to order out the guard. As he did so, however, the noises below suddenly died away, and through the breaking ranks of Visayans he saw the dim figures of Smith and Hilton coming toward the balcony with a native between them.

"Turn up the lights, Hong Kong. Pray retain your

seats, gentlemen. Let us see what sort of a fish we have caught."

As the Lieutenant spoke, the officers and their prisoner came up the stairs, and met the gleam of the lamp as Hong Kong hastened to obey. The crowd on the plaza had moved over to the Tribunal, and stood silently, it seemed almost sullenly, packed in the shadows below. Najera had followed the officers up the stairs, and stood opposite the prisoner, looking keenly at him. As to the prisoner himself, he was a most forlorn spectacle. Short and squat, almost a dwarf by nature, with long arms, short, bowed legs, his head crowded down into broad shoulders, his figure alone would have caused laughter. But his face was even more emphatically food for the comedian. His matted, stiff gray hair bristled over a low, wrinkled brow, from which his small eyes blinked under heavy ambushes. His ears were large and well up on the head, his nose flat, and his mouth flanked by circles of wrinkled skin. He had been dressed in the rude clothing of a mountaineer, but the mob had apparently battered and mauled him, for his baboon-like face was slowly bleeding and his clothing was a mass of dirty tatters.

"What have we here?" asked Lieutenant Heart sternly, after the subsidence of a general tendency to laugh at the ludicrous figure.

Patricio stepped forward to question the man, but Najera, his eyes snapping with excitement, spoke before he could do so.

"Pardon, cavaliers, but I can myself inform you. This man is the last remaining member of Montor's band of ladrones. I congratulate your Excellencies that you have, this fortunate night, delivered us from the one last great enemy of my parish."

The "padre" had spoken, in Spanish. He turned and spoke to the prisoner in the same tongue.

"Your name is Domingo, one-time 'chieftain with dignity' of the 'barrio' Calvary. Later you were with Montor the Moro. Is this not so?"

The prisoner nervously jerked himself into a more upright position, and, fixing his eyes deprecatingly, not upon his questioner but upon the young Commander of Alcala, muttered a few sentences in his dialect.

"What does he answer, Patricio?" asked Heart.

"He says that he is Domingo of Calvary, and that he has done much wickedness, but that he has been a different man this year, and wishes to live at peace with all men."

The Lieutenant turned toward the General.

"I know of the rascal myself, General. Some months ago it was a common thing to hear of his brutalities as a chief of 'barrio' up in the hills to the west of us. He was notorious as a man of bad disposition, who felt compelled to 'run amuck' every few weeks. I heard a rumor, too, that he had been with Montor del Moro. It is most fortunate, sir, that we have him in our hands at last. Do you wish to catechize him, or shall I send him over to the guard house?"

The General had no questions to put to the prisoner, who shuffled down the stairs under escort of Privates Macklin and Anton. The crowd had been waiting for his reappearance, and made no attempt to molest him, as they divined his destination to be the jail. They began, however, to shout in unison:

"Down with the 'protestante'! Death to the enemies of the Church!"

The little General gave a start, jerking his chair forward so as to command a view of the plaza better. The whole group stirred uneasily.

"What's that they are shouting down there?" asked the Brigadier, with a suggestion of a steel-spring in the snap

of his voice. "What has Protestantism and the Church to do with this episode?"

As he spoke the crowd, moving over toward the guard house in the wake of the prisoner, shouted again:

"Death to the Judas traitor! Death to the infidel 'protestante'!"

Hilton had disappeared down the stairs to instruct the hospital steward to dress the prisoner's wounds. He reappeared at the moment.

"This may help to explain matters, General Hugelet," he said quietly, extending a little black-bound book to the Brigadier.

Followed by the entire party, the General arose and moved over under the swinging kerosene lamp to investigate its contents. Fumbling an instant for his eyeglasses, he raised the little volume and opened to the title page.

"Seems to be in Visayan or some other dialect. Here, interpreter, what is this title?"

Najera, his face distorted with suppressed emotion, started forward as if to snatch the book from the General's hand, but evidently thought better of his rashness. Patricio gravely interpreted:

"The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

An exclamation of surprise came from several.

"One thing more, Señor," said the General quickly, "what is the imprint? Where was the book issued?"

Again the interpreter bent over the little volume.

"The Evangelical Baptist Mission Press at Jaro," he slowly read. "First edition."

Heart could not suppress a start of surprise.

"The prisoner was selling these on the plaza to-night, General, when the mob assaulted him," explained the Doctor.

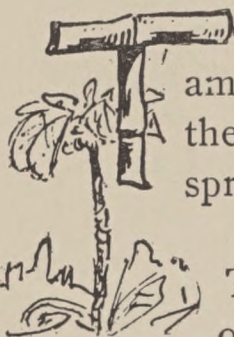
As the Doctor spoke, the entire party turned and looked

instinctively toward Najera. The lean figure of the priest had drawn itself rigidly and menacingly up.

"This complicates the case somewhat, my friends," said the little General, speaking in Spanish to the entire group, but still looking coldly at Najera. "Fair play is a Saxon principle. Lieutenant Heart will see that the prisoner gets it. My ambulance will start at midnight for Tig-bauan. I bid you all good night."

VII

A TRANSFORMED MEMBER OF MONTOR'S BAND



THE sun had circled thrice since the General's ambulance had rattled away into the south, and the day set for the trial of Domingo the ladrone spread its hot light over the garrison.

The prisoner had been brought over to the Tribunal under guard, and blinkingly faced not only the three commissioned officers of the post, but a large number of witnesses and spectators, the more important of these seated, but the greater number standing closely against the walls.

Heart had been the last to come in, with his interpreter at his back, and as he strode to his place behind the judicial desk, he returned the salute of the guards and the rising salutation of the Visayans with an air of abstraction. For of all men in the room, not excepting even the man on trial for his life, the young commander was the most agitated. Although in outward manner cool to carelessness, his mind was racing between the probable alternatives of the trial. To judge a Filipino on any charge had proven on occasion an easy matter hitherto, and from the notoriety of Domingo in the Alcala district he felt that the decision on the evidence would be a simple task. Domingo's condemnation would mean, too, a firmer hold upon the confidence of the natives in his district, and would help in carrying out further his plans for their benefit. The disturbing element was

Domingo's apparent connection with the Jaro missionaries.

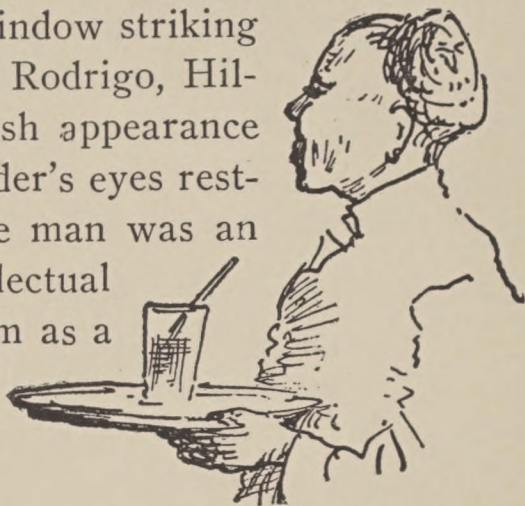
Every hour of consciousness since the sweet face of Grace Duval had looked upon Lieutenant Heart her image had become more and more sacred to him, and, in spite of his training and his strongly opinionated nature, he knew that his dislike for her profession was being steadily undermined by his growing love. To bring a feather-weight of trouble to her life would be a torture almost unbearable to him, and he felt that if a tithe of his ideals of her were true, the condemnation of the old ladrone, though he might be the least of her "THE LITTLE GENERAL" proselytes, would cause her most genuine sorrow of heart. It was this fear, as much as the instinct for fair-play, which had prompted him to send a message addressed impersonally to "The Baptist Mission at Jaro," reporting the arrest of Domingo and suggesting that a representative of the Mission be present at the trial. A wild hope had surged in his heart that Grace herself might make the journey, but he had laughed at his daring hope immediately after. "Even the brother would do," he said to himself with a smile, picturing what a veritable gate of heaven an acquaintance with that brother might prove to be.

The message had been sent on Tuesday. This was Thursday. As yet no answer had been received, and he took his seat with a hopeless feeling that the prosecution would prove the sum-total of the trial. At his request old Don Rodrigo had consented to act as "abogado" for the prisoner, but for hardly any other reason than to fulfil a conventional requirement.

As Heart settled himself in his chair his eye swept the circle of faces before him. Yes, they were all apparently



ready to begin. Monty was to act as prosecutor, and he sat at the right of the table, with a group of his witnesses about him. The priests, officials and audience showed no necessary man missing. The prisoner was at the left-front of the judge, the light from the window striking him fairly. Near him sat Don Rodrigo, Hilton, and a third man of Spanish appearance upon whom the young commander's eyes rested an instant in surprise. The man was an utter stranger, yet his intellectual face and neat dress marked him as a man of position. With a sudden hope leaping in the young judge's heart he announced the opening of the court.



HONG KONG.

In the early days of American occupation in the Islands a multitude of unaccustomed duties devolved upon the staff and line officers of the American Army. Heart had found a liberal education in trying to meet the many emergencies of administration in his petty kingdom, and although he cut the Gordian knot oftentimes, and ignored some of the usual formalities of judicial proceeding, his hybrid court, half civil, half martial, was soon making creditable progress.

Amid the most rigid attention of all present, from the Presidente Soriano to the humblest betel-chewing native who craned his pompadoured head over the more privileged ones in front of him, the prosecution began its remorseless moves toward the prisoner's life. A succession of witnesses shuffled up before the desk, and, with remarkable agreement for Malayan testimony, brought the facts of the prisoner's previous evil life out in detail. As Heart had anticipated, it was a record woven in the dark colors of vice and violence. Although no murder was directly ascribed to him, his cruelty as chieftain of the "barrio" of Calvary was clearly shown, and his temporary connection with Montor's

band seemingly proven quite decisively. As native after native from Alcala, Tig-bauan, San Blas, and Ignotan gave their quick, eager accusation, almost unchallenged by Don Rodrigo, Heart, bending his ear to the rapid translations of Patricio, began to formulate in mind his closing speech, in which he would of necessity seal the prisoner's fate.

After going thoroughly into the career of Domingo, the prosecution closed with two brief speeches, the first by Padre Najera, and the second by Soriano.

Standing in as dramatic a pose as his hindering "soutane" permitted, the former spoke, at first sauvely, and then vehemently:

"Knowing the incorruptibility of the illustrious American commander, it is with the more pleasure that I urge the condemnation of the criminal who trembles before us. It will be thought, perhaps, that my eagerness in his prosecution is due to his having espoused the cause of the heretical Protestants. Oh! your Excellency, do me no such infamy! Controlled by the pure motive of Christian love for my parish, my flock over which the Holy Church has made me the overseer, I plead with you to condemn and destroy this wolf, this devouring enemy of our felicity. Having so fully won the unrestrained affection of Alcala, do not forfeit it by the release of this traitor to his people's interests, this devourer of the helpless!"

The "padre" sat down amid a loud murmur of assent from the natives.

Portly Soriano finished the innings of the prosecution. After speaking of his personal knowledge of the prisoner's cruelties, he ended with a plea similar to that of the slender Najera. But it was much less effective, the "presidente" being unable to resist the temptation to show off a handful of recently acquired English words, in place of the sounding Spanish of his predecessor.

"Our beloved father een Christo—he spik thee truth.

Eet ees the whole people who cry out for Justeece! Justeece! I, Soriano, elected by thees peoples, I *know*! Your Excellency, Domingo ees as a snake een the grass. He ees as a dagger een the darkness. He join heemself to the Protestants to hide heemself from our revenge. Let heem not escape the vengeance of the sublime American law!"

The "presidente" sat down, mopping his shiny mahogany face.

"Death to the insulter of Mary!" suddenly cried a voice near the door. "Kill the Iscariot!"

A group of natives back of the prisoner swayed menacingly toward him.

"Order!" thundered the young judge, forgetting his Spanish in the excitement. "Macklin, throw that disturber out."

"Yis *sorr*!"

Macklin's hand snapped forward in a salute to his grinning face and backward to the fanatic's collar. Then, accompanied by a shrill staccato of expostulation, came the sound of a rapidly descending body, thumping down the stairs.

The Americans smiled for the first time in the trial, and Heart took advantage of the interruption to light a cigar and stare at the stranger seated at Don Rodrigo's side.

As has been intimated, Don Rodrigo's position as counsel for the defendant was hardly more than a pleasantry. The old Castillian, willing to put a spoke in the wheel of Visayan pretension, had once or twice cross-examined a witness and shown up trifling disagreements in their testimony. He had, too, elicited one or two facts favorable to the prisoner, for instance, that Domingo, when assaulted by the mob on the plaza, had refused to strike back at his tormentors, although noted among the Visayans for his strength of muscle and quickness of temper.

Now, however, the Don was able to urge forward a hesitating young native from Santa Barbara, who had come

over to the Alcala "Mercado" to trade on the day of Domingo's arrest. He deprecatingly witnessed that Domingo had been living at Jaro and Santa Barbara of late, and had been apparently a changed man. He was kindly and peaceable, and did nothing wrong save to associate with the wicked heretics who were preaching at the Jaro market, and sold their books to the "pueblos" and "barrios" around Iloilo.

A sound of dissent and indignation was audible as the young Santa Barbara merchant resumed his place against the wall, Najera turning and looking at him with a face eloquent of threatenings.

"And now," said the courtly ex-Governor, with a gleam in his expressive eyes and a rather dramatic pose of his body, "and now, your Excellency, I have the honor of presenting to you the element of surprise, that without which, as the poet Valentio has so certainly said, 'Life were but death itself.' The gentleman who sits with me to-day resembles so much in face and figure the men of my beloved mother-land, glorious Castille, that it is with very many grievings that I must present him to you as the American Doctor of Theology, Señor Davidson Duval, of the Mission Evangelical at Jaro."

The bearded stranger had risen to Don Rodrigo's side as his name was announced, a smile struggling with the grave lines of his finely moulded face. The announcement of his identity was variously received. He had evidently been food for speculation in the minds of all present. The majority of the Visayans, however, showed little surprise, possibly because the introduction was in Spanish. But Soriano's countenance was widely agape, and Padre Ricarte looked most comically dismayed. Najera focused his beady eyes upon the missionary with a wrinkling brow of impatience and chagrin.

The Lieutenant arose to his feet and acknowledged the

bow of the stranger, his example followed more or less reluctantly by the entire assemblage. As they resumed their positions Dr. Duval alone remained standing, and his calm, sonorous voice began its testimony in faultless Spanish.

"I owe you something of an apology, Lieutenant Heart," he said quietly, "for not more speedily replying to your summons. Being away upon a preaching tour I found the message awaiting me only last night. It was with difficulty that I could arrive but a few brief minutes before this trial began. Dr. Hilton kindly piloted me to this room—I met him on the plaza—and I now have the honor of speaking in behalf of the prisoner. Having spent a number of years in Spain in the service of my Board, I take the liberty of following the example of others who have submitted their testimony to-day in the Spanish tongue, and using that convenient and beautiful medium.

"As we have all noticed in the testimony adduced, Domingo, the prisoner, has lived a life of passion and greed. I speak no word of defense concerning his life up to a few brief months ago. I am very sensible of the fact that he has been a man of violence and cruelties. We who preach the gospel of the grace of God are seldom inclined to make light of the guilt of man, and in my soul of souls I abhor the record of Domingo as revealed to you this morning by the witnesses for the prosecution, but confessed freely to me months ago."

A movement on the part of the prisoner drew the attention of the Lieutenant from the speaker. His gray head, until now held stolidly and staringly to the front, had first turned toward the missionary, and then had fallen forward between his hands, while his strange, dwarf-like body twitched convulsively. The speaker noticed it, and a smile of wonderful tenderness illuminated his face for an instant as his eyes fell upon the bowed head with its matted hair.

"Señores," he continued, "I first met Domingo perhaps

a year ago. It may be a little less than that. I entered our little bamboo chapel in Jaro one Lord's day morning, and saw him squatting upon the dirt floor near the platform. I confess to you that his appearance was almost repulsive to me, and it was with great surprise that I found him a continuous attendant upon our services. Later on I even found him bringing people from his old mountain village of Calvary to hear the gospel. As you are all aware, though the outward forms of the Catholic faith obtain quite generally in this island, there remains a great deal of the old pagan worship. In view of this fact we had provided a box near the pulpit, and it was our custom to demand of any who desired to join us that they first cast their charms and fetiches into this receptacle. It was with no little emotion that one morning I beheld Domingo slip up to the box and drop something into it. 'Confess,' I said, approaching him, 'what has been your charm, the god in which you have trusted?' As I spoke I reached down and pulled this object out of the box."

The speaker paused and held up a little bottle, partly filled with a yellow fluid.

"'Has this been your god, Domingo?' I asked. With downcast eyes he nodded his head, and then lifted his face and said: 'Missionary, that bottle of oil has been my charm for a long time. Many "años" ago, when I was but a lad, a witch-woman gave me that in a market-place, and told me that I should always wear it. I have obeyed until this day. Sometimes I would start on a journey without it, but if so I seemed always to have bad luck. I could not make a good trade. I lost money. It seemed to bring me good luck when I wore it. But now I think it was all a falsehood. I have heard of the loving Christ. He only shall be my trust and my charm from now on'."

At this point in the recital several Filipinos along the wall felt furtively at their necks to assure themselves that

their scapulas were still beneath their shirts. Two or three of the officials crossed themselves rapidly. Najera sprang to his feet and said angrily:

"Excellency, is not the learned American merely telling us a story? It may be of interest to some, but it is not evidence."

"Order! padre, order!" said Heart frowning. "Dr. Duval doubtless has good reason for this recital. Let it be understood that he is not to be interrupted."

The missionary bowed slightly in appreciation, and resumed his story.

"After Domingo's professed conversion he confessed frankly to our little circle at Jaro his many sins of the past. The unsettled conditions on this island seemed to me something of a reason why he should not be turned over to the American authorities. Had not America intervened in these Spanish colonies to give the oppressed a better chance? Who needed that chance more than the repentant Domingo? And as the weeks and months have passed I had the evidence that his old habits had been positively broken with. So earnest did he become in his new religious life that when, a few months ago, we baptized the first converts to our faith in the Jaro River and organized them into a church, I not only felt Domingo worthy of baptism, but rejoiced to see him chosen as the first deacon of the little band. The day of his election was a day of great gladness to me, although my colleague was near to death in our mission house, and my sister also was in precarious health. But my joy was not to last. The day following Domingo was in Iloilo, and being incensed at some sneer at his new faith, became violent and quarrelsome, and was jailed for fighting his tormentor.

"Of course the news was a great blow to us at the Mission. After having labored so long, and at last having organized our little band, then to have the leader of it

branded with shame on the second day of his induction into office was an experience of great bitterness to me. I refused in consequence either to furnish bail for Domingo or to use my influence in having him freed. I sent him word that upon his release he was not to return to the Mission, but to go back to the mountains. I even instructed my 'muchacho' not to admit him into my study. He obtained his release a few days later, and at once, in spite of my prohibition, came out to Jaro to see me. I shall never forget his visit. The 'muchacho' tried to prevent his entrance, but Domingo is a strong old man, and he easily pushed my guard aside and stepped into my presence. When, looking up, I recognized him, I lashed him with every bitter word my rankled soul could summon. 'Out of my sight!' I ended. 'Never come to me again. You have disgraced us all, and there is no way of making it right.' The old man fell as though smitten by a bolt from heaven, and groveled upon the floor. I dared not look at him for fear that I should relent. As I turned my face again to my books he began to pray, and the words he said will never leave me. 'O God,' he cried, 'I have lost thy Spirit from my heart. Give me back that Spirit of peace or I shall die!' He then rose partly from his knees, and with streaming cheeks said, 'Señor, is it not possible for you again to care for me?' I am not ashamed to say that I fell at his side upon my knees, and put my arm about him, and told him that I freely forgave him. I had no sooner done so than his face was illuminated. 'God has once more put his good Spirit into my heart,' he said brokenly, and bowed his head in thanksgiving.

"Now you may wonder why I tell this simple story. It is all as an introduction to the statement which I now desire to make. Listen! From that day in my study until this present time, months of bitter persecution have passed over Domingo's head, and he has been mocked and mobbed

many times. But of my own intimate knowledge I can testify that he has lived a pure, a humble, an industrious, and a kindly life. He has acted as an agent for the sale of our books of late, and he has had many provocations. Yet he has never even struck a man since that scene in my study, and many of the people of Jaro, of Molo, of Pavia, and even of Calvary 'barrio,' have come to love the old ex-ladrone. The other day I was interested in hearing a group of men in a market-place telling about some one whom they repeatedly called 'Si Gugma.' I am just getting a slender hold on the Visayan dialect, and I broke in with a query, 'What is the meaning of the name "Si Gugma"?' They replied, 'It is a nick-name. It means "Old Love".' 'To whom do you apply it?' 'Why, do you not know?' they asked. 'That is Domingo's new name. Ever since the great change in him he lives so kindly a life and speaks so often of the love of God to the people that all about here are calling him "Old Love."'

The missionary had concluded his words with deep feeling. As he took his seat there was an intense quiet, even the uneasy Najera sitting as in a spell, watching the face of the prisoner. Heart's even voice broke the silence.

"Patricio, ask the prisoner if he has anything to say to us."

The interpreter stepped over to the prisoner, whose head had remained bowed throughout Dr. Duval's recital, and put the question to him. The whole manner of the man had hitherto been awkward and diffident, but when the meaning of the interpreter was made clear to him he dropped his hands from his face and rose from his chair. As he did so Heart remarked again the baboon-like face, the gnarled, dwarfed, powerful body.

Clasping his hands as they hung before him, the old man bowed humbly to his judges, and began to speak. As he poured forth the Visayan dialect, a rude and tumultuous

vocabulary, his soul seemed to triumph over the hideousness of his face, and his stunted body appeared to straighten and gain by inches. As he continued one by one his audience capitulated, and stood or sat in motionless attention. Even Heart and his brother officers, who understood but little of the dialect, were amazed at the transformation of the man's form and face. He was pouring out his very soul, and the whole Tribunal did him homage.

He had first spoken haltingly of his past life, and as he did so two tears welled in his little eyes and rolled into the wrinkles of his cheeks. He went on apparently to tell of his conversion, for his face grew glad, and he gesticulated toward Dr. Duval in evident gratitude. Then came the climax of his testimony. Raising his smiling, grizzled old face upward, and stretching out his huge and muscular arms, he struck himself repeatedly upon the breast and said, while the tears again flowed from his eyes:

"O masters! my wickedness is past, and my heart has been made pure. Fear me not. There has been a great change. I do not know how it was done. Once I was cruel; once I was thievish; once I was evil-minded. But I cannot do the old things any more. I cannot hate. I cannot strike back. My heart is filled with love. I feel like the thirsty palm-tree in the cool night wind, for God's Spirit has come to me. God's Word has spoken to me. This is love, not that I love God, but that he loves me and gave himself for me! Americans! Spaniards! Filipinos! Let us all serve the great Christ together! Let us be brothers, with all the wickedness gone out of us!"

It was not the words which moved the very souls of his hearers. They were, in fact, but partly understood by Heart and the other Americans in the room. Even with some who comprehended them they were hardly heeded. But the unbroken silence that held the court-room in thrall as the old disciple stood silently awaiting permission to be

seated, gave evidence that the power of a tremendous fact was gripping their souls. Not a few in that audience had seen Domingo on other occasions, in the old days when his hideous face had been their terror in a raid of fierce lardrones from the hills. For a moment prejudice of race and of religion were swept like chaff before the testimony of a changed life. The alchemy of the grace of God had been demonstrated before them. Another soul was living in old Domingo's body. Out of the windows of a Caliban hut they beheld the flashings of a princely spirit, and a *fact* had battered down their theories with a single crushing blow. They would recover in a moment. Meanwhile Heart was speaking:

"It only remains to pronounce sentence," he said gravely, almost reverently, as he stood and faced the prisoner. "It is, however, beyond my power to sentence the Domingo of the past, and he alone has been condemned. It is not Domingo, but 'Si Gugma' who is with us here. There is no charge against that name on the books of this court. 'Si Gugma,' the court requires you to return to Calvary 'barrio' to administer it upon the principles of your new life. The present chief of that 'barrio' is a rascal who never had enough energy to be a lardrone, and, I am afraid, will never have enough sense to be converted. I appoint you as his successor. Go back to your people and make amends for the past. The court is dismissed."

"Say, Smith," whispered Hilton, as the two watched the now sullen and resentful Visayans filter away across the plaza, while Heart pressed an invitation to luncheon upon Rodrigo and the missionary, "that was a miracle which we witnessed just now. You and I have seen a good deal of these Visayans. Have you ever seen one shed a tear before?"

"Heavens, no!" said Monty solemnly. "If I had been back in old Detroit to-day, and seen that wooden Indian

out in front of Crecy's smoke-shop suddenly blow its nose, I wouldn't have been so eternally dunder-struck as I was when that old ladrone turned on his water works. A Filipino weeping over his sins! Pinch me!"

VIII

AN INSURGENT TORCH FOR CALVARY



HEART stood watching the early morning drill as Company I swung and flowed in veteran ease at the command of the first sergeant. He noticed with satisfaction the lack of stiffness in the line. The men were not acting like a machine. They were rippling and snapping through their evolutions with a grace acquired through long acquaintance with each other and hearty devotion to their officers.

Only a brother line officer could appreciate the exultation of the post commander as the sun-tanned faces flowed past him at changing angles. Every individual in the ranks he knew, and though a mixed lot in race, morals and education, he felt them to be welded into one multiplied, living obedience to orders. Another reflection went even nearer to his heart—he had reason to believe that the greater part was most passionately devoted to himself. Heart had been an officer of Company I now for more than two years; first as a second lieutenant, then as a first lieutenant, and now, in the absence of gruff old Captain Blakeslee, as commander. He had drilled them, scolded them, praised them, and (I grieve to say) cursed them. Many of them he had personally recruited. He had invested in them a thousand little kindnesses. No cook

could easily scale down their full ration, and no embryo gamblers from the "Q.M.D." were able to fleece them on pay day. The young officer's watchfulness had followed them, not only through their hours at the garrison, but even while off duty and "on leave." Beginning this paternal policy as a matter of efficiency, he had continued it because of his genuine interest in the individual men, and no junior of the Army was, in consequence, more devotedly served. At first the new men made the usual attempts to "bluff" the youthful, even boyish looking officer, and tried with the ingenuity born of hours of meditation in quarters, and assisted by a wealth of Army traditions, to "work" him. But this could not flourish long. These "rookies," or drafted men from more discontented commands, soon felt the double shock of the keen lieutenant's sharp checkmate, and the inelegantly expressed disapproval of the barracks.

"They're the finest in the Fifty-fifth, and aching for a fight," he mused, leaning against the arch of the barrack's entrance. "Shutting down on 'bino' and Povey's precious brand has done them good. But I must keep up their ration, and see they get an extra now and then, for an army, as the great Boney has well said, travels on its stomach."

He made a mental note of a requisition for some of the fresh onions which, quick gastric rumor had it, were being piled up at the Iloilo wharves, and as he did so, suddenly, around the far end of the "convento" a "muchacho" appeared, his feet twinkling with a burst of speed as he espied the officer and ran to him. He evidently carried news of moment, for his face was shining with perspiration, and his feet were bleeding through their dustiness.

"At your feet, Cavalier!" he gasped, his brown hand clutched convulsively over his breast and his eyes rolling. "The 'insurrectos' burned Calvary 'barrio' last night, and killed many defenseless ones because of Domingo, the protestante—"

The Commander waited for no more.

"Here, Anton!" he cried to the sentry at the entrance. "Hold on to this 'muchacho' for me—" and he dived into the arch.

"Commanding—officer—turn—out—the—guard!" bawled a hastily appearing sergeant.

"Never mind the guard," echoed the Lieutenant sharply. "We'll want the whole command this time. Smith above?"

"Yes, sir. With the company clerk, sir."

"Tell him I want him at headquarters at once. 'Pronto,' Wilson!"

"Yes, sir."

The Sergeant was off, and the Commander as well, first shouting a command to the First Sergeant which brought the drilling men to dismissal, and then racing over to the Tribunal with the Visayan runner behind him.

"Here, Hilton, pump this fellow while I 'phone Iloilo. Calvary 'barrio' was burned last night, and if I understand this 'hombre' aright, it was because of my court decision the other day. Bring in Patricio to help you. Quickly, old man!"

"Patricio has disappeared. I've hunted the whole premises for him. He must have stayed out in town last night," responded the Doctor, springing up from the table.

"Do your best alone, then. Get the details while I get Iloilo."

As the Doctor pulled the panting Visayan to a seat and began his inquisition, Heart sprang to the telephone. But it rang before he reached it, and he bent his ear expectantly to the faint voice of far-away Krug, creaking north over the faulty wires in short, vigorous sentences.

Fifteen minutes later Company I was one glad mob of intelligent motion. The whole garrison buzzed with prophetic activity, and out of the "corral" raced a mounted detachment of seven cheerful units under brave Irish De-

laney to scout the Calvary trail. Hardly had their dust settled on the plaza when the entire company swung at a lively step through the town and into the same trail, Heart and Smith ahead of the long brown line on their willing ponies.

"Good-bye, Doc. Hold down Alcala till we get back," shouted the latter, waving his hat to Hilton, who leaned wistfully over the veranda of the Tribunal, for orders were orders, and he must remain in command of the post with a dozen other malcontents as garrison, while his friends and his comrades had the favor of Mars and the privilege of a blistering "hike" and the joy of a possible angry argument with wily old Concepcion in the brown hills to the west.

"Always my luck," thought the victim. "Hope Herbert gets a flesh-wound and a trip to Brigade Hospital out of this. A trip to Iloilo might do him good. Somebody lives quite close to Iloilo."

He watched the last scintillations of the disappearing rifles, and then called down to the lonesome sentry beneath the balcony,

"Castells!"

The man looked up and saluted.

"I haven't an orderly here. Go over to the barracks and tell the sergeant to instruct the outposts. No Filipinos are to leave the town by any trail earlier than noon. No exceptions to this. Lieutenant Heart's orders."

"All right, sir. We can hold 'em in, sir," and the sentry hurried over the plaza through the increasing number of excited Visayans.

* * * * *

When twelve o'clock came, by authority of a moist watch pulled from Monty Smith's sweaty "khaki" blouse, Company I halted on the Calvary trail, spread itself out in the scanty shade, peeled off the tops of corned-beef cans,

spilled hard-tack crumbs over itself, and guzzled at lukewarm canteens. Then, with its hat over its face and its knees up, it slept around a mound of haversacks and blanket rolls, while its officers counseled and planned and tried their feeble Visayan once more upon the runner from Calvary. By what they could gather from his mixture of Spanish and dialect, old Concepcion had been lingering around Calvary in the hills for some days. The "barrio" itself was wretched and unprotected, save for a detail of recently organized native police armed with bolos. Its people were all of the peasant class, and had taken little or no part in the insurrection. They were nick-named "Carabao" by the more urban populations, and their neutral attitude in only asking the privilege of peaceable lives had caused them no little petty persecution from the cattle-hungry band of patriots who still clung to the waning fortunes of the insurgent chieftain.

Upon Domingo's release three days before, he had gone back, attended by a small escort of American soldiers, to his old "casa" in the "barrio," and had been on the whole quite warmly received. Several of the families had been under the influence of Dr. Duval's preaching at the Jaro market-place, and these had led in a little celebration over the return of their fellow villager. Several rude American flags had been displayed, and the American escort treated with simple hospitality. Hardly had the escort left, however, when a note came in from the insurgents saying that they had heard of the disregard of the wishes of Alcala in respect to Domingo, the ex-ladrone, and considered his reception and the raising of the American flag at Calvary "barrio" a gross insult to the honor of the Filipino Republic. "Let all friends of the North Americans beware of the wrath of the illustrious Concepcion."

Upon the arrival of this threat Domingo had at once left for Jaro, not wishing to cause the ruin of his village,

and it was hoped that his withdrawal would soothe the angered insurgents. But on the contrary, it led to the destruction of the place. Last night the "barrio" had been stormed and searched for the hated "protestante"; and when he was not found, the entire place was burned, several who were suspected of Protestant or pro-American leanings were murdered, and the native police taken prisoners to the hills. Not only this, but Concepcion's men had openly boasted that they would soon repeat their tactics at Ignotan and other hill "barrios."

"It seems strange, Monty, that you and I should be out to avenge the burning of a Filipino town, doesn't it?" asked Heart as he sat braced against a palm tree in the midst of his sleeping men. "Four or five months ago we would have chuckled over such an act on old Concepcion's part. Yet here we are fighting for the Filipinos against their own idol! I, at least, must be in a state of evolution. Now give me your attention a moment on this map. The General was kind enough to place Turenne's men at my disposal. They will meet us at Ignotan to-night, coming over from San Blas. I do not think that either they or we will see an insurgent before to-morrow morning, if then. Concepcion has tasted blood, however, and I expect Ignotan will be his next objective. He will probably attack within forty-eight hours. If we can get in ahead of him, why, our task will be easy so far as defending the town is concerned, and perhaps there will be an opportunity for a crushing blow. Now let us give this back country around Ignotan a little consideration. If we can only come in behind him while he's busy with the attack on the 'barrio'—"

* * * * *

At four o'clock Company I was doubling down the hills into the blackened pit which once had called itself Calvary, and its columns were augmented by frightened natives who trailed disconsolately back to their ruined domiciles.

But the men did not halt long at Calvary—only until the Lieutenant examined, with the aid of a picked-up interpreter, the survivors of the massacre of the night before. Then hurriedly through the still smouldering place the command picked its way, eager for the sound of hostile firing. At seven o'clock the trail twisted to the right, and at nine o'clock the scanty lights of Ignotan twinkled below them in a cup-like valley. A half-hour later they were fraternizing with Turenne's command, who, reckless and fight-hungry, had rioted over on Cagayan ponies from San Blas and occupied the town from its opposite end a scanty half-hour before them.

Turenne greeted Heart with a laughing sentence.

"So you got your Sunday-school here at last, did you, Heart? By Jove, sir, but I've heard terribly pious things of you since last we met. Here's the house the 'presidente' has reserved for your use to-night as a headquarters. Come in and take a 'How' to old Concepcion's confusion."

Heart's response was purely official.

"So this is the headquarters shack for the night? Let's go in then, and get to work on our little problem. We'll cut out the drinks, thanks. I'm a temperance crank now-a-days."

IX

THE WATER-CURE AT IGNOTAN



MIDNIGHT found Ignotan in profound darkness, its only light filtering through the headquarters "casa," a building somewhat larger than its fellows, and standing high upon bamboo stilts in the center of the tipsy row of houses constituting the one long street of the town. A gentle rain had begun to fall, and made an infinity of black, changing lines across the gray murk of a starless sky. It also gently, persistently soaked through the shoulders of Private Anton's khaki blouse as he stood patiently on guard in the mud.

Anton was a native of Mesopotamia, with its dry, date-bearing soil. He disliked a wetting as sincerely as a house-cat, and moved closer up to the shelter of the headquarters, hearing with satisfaction the rattle above his head as the nipa leaves of the projecting thatch stood guard above him, and bravely met the down-pour. As he settled his back against the supporting bamboo stilts and wiped the breech of his gun with the dry side of his sleeve, his ear caught a mere suggestion of a foreign sound—a sound which he knew to be no part of the low voices of his officers from within, or the beat of the rain without. It seemed to come from directly behind him, and he stooped and stared into the blackness beneath the house. But his eye was balked, and,

not hearing a repetition of the sound, he muttered a malediction upon both Ignotan with its mud and its rain, and the gaudy army poster which had allured him into the service, and again composed himself with eyes toward the shadowy road, rifle ready, but thoughts far off in the valley of the great Euphrates, the cradle of his race.

Thus it was that an unobtrusive, retiring Visayan heard, with unmoved face but quickly beating heart, valuable information for his side of the coming rifle-debate, and stole from under the split-bamboo floor and safely away through the slippery grass to the side entrance of the barrio chapel, a hundred yards back up the hill from the dingy street.

Heart, in the room above the place vacated by the spy, unwound his legs and rose, stretching, to his feet. Turenne still sat looking carelessly at a candle-lit map spread out on the floor. His junior lieutenant, Henry, cross-legged and nervously twisting his hat-cord, looked up at Heart expectantly. Smith, slender and *debonair*, stood in belted readiness against the wall.

Heart yawned prodigiously.

"That's all, I think, gentlemen," he said, reaching for his hat. "Concepcion will doubtless attack in the early morning, if at all. Smith will hold him, even with thirty men of Company I. Don't utilize more men at first. If he thinks us weak he will become careless. Lieutenant Turenne and his scouts will, as soon as the firing begins, circle well to the north of any line which the enemy develops, and will strike back in toward the old sugar-mill which Delaney reports as directly beyond the first ridge to our west. This will result, I trust, in a heavy loss to the enemy, who, provided the mill is captured, will find themselves in a bad cross-fire as they advance on Ignotan. With the remainder of Company I, as already outlined, I will at once start back toward Calvary, and then, by the use of the hill trails, circle the enemy's right and be in a position to attack him in his

rear in conjunction with Turenne's movement. It is very important that we act together. Don't precipitate the fight. The longer Concepcion delays the more time I shall have for my turning movement. He can't have less than a couple of hundred rifles. Let him do the brunt of the powder-burning. I'll make the rounds of the outposts with you, Smith, before I leave. Good-night, and good luck."

Turenne puffed the candle out, and the two departing officers, pulling down their hat-brims, stepped out and down into the rain, both searching the gloomy night keenly as they stumbled on in the mud toward the southernmost outpost. They could not have covered a dozen yards when both stopped abruptly and stood staring to their left, up the hill. The tower of the chapel rose indistinctly against the sky-line, and an unmistakable light shone intermittently from its belfry. And it was a light of strange behavior. In the few seconds that the two Sons of Mars stood regarding it, it had swung to the right in a complete circle, back to the left in two more, had halted, had disappeared—re-appeared—disappeared finally.

Neither officer had spoken, but, moved by the same impulse, they turned their faces westward and waited. Their instinct was unerring. Far off in the rainy, uncertain gloom, which they knew to be the line of the Antigie hills, they saw a pin-point of reddish light appear—circle—disappear.

"Now, Monty! up the hill to the chapel! It will be the side door. Don't let the rascal answer that last one—" Heart whispered hoarsely, his eye turned back toward the



ANTON ON GUARD.

tower. If he begins before you get there I'll send a shot into the belfry. Anton! quick with you! Follow the Lieutenant!"

The two scrambled off the road, and up through the underbrush of the slope, lost almost instantly to the eye of the young commander who stood alertly in the road below, his face growing impatient as he found himself able to follow Anton's clumsy step with his practised ear. Some one else heard also, for Turenne suddenly loomed at his side with a whispered query.

"Insurgent signals from the church tower," rapidly explained Heart. "Go up and help Smith, Turenne. We must interrupt this at once.

Turenne was swallowed up of darkness, and again the young commander stood alone in the street. He drew his heavy Colt from his belt, and tensely waited while the rain sifted unnoticed upon him.

"Ten seconds more and Smith will be up there," he thought. "But we can't let this flame conversation continue another syllable. If it shows again I'll try a shot."

As if to mock him the eye of fire suddenly appeared in the black tower, held motionless for an instant and then began slowly to circle.

"Bang!"

The Lieutenant had fired accurately. The report of his heavy revolver had scarcely crashed into the night when the light in the belfry went into a spray of sparks and disappeared. Almost immediately Smith's shrill voice cried exultingly down from the slope.

"All serene, Lieutenant! We have him salted down. Are you all right yourself, sir?"

Plunging forward through the wet grass Heart found Turenne and his fellow officer, with Anton, kneeling around a prostrate figure stretched in the mud at the side door of the chapel. The spy had apparently dashed down the stone

stairs from the tower, had raced through the interior, and had been felled by Anton's clubbed rifle as he stumbled out of the entrance. He had fallen without a cry, and a curiously perforated box had rolled from his hand down the slope. He had used it to cover his torch between signals.

"We'll have him in speaking shape shortly. Anton didn't lay on quite square enough—took him on a slant," said Turenne, coolly rubbing his hand over the prostrate man's skull and wiping his bloody fingers on the wet grass. "Shall we get what we can out of him, Lieutenant?"

"Yes, if he comes to, find out what you can from him. Anton, get a man to help you carry this fellow. Lieutenant Smith, remain here with Lieutenant Turenne. I'll make the rounds alone."

So saying, the young officer hurried rapidly away to inspect and reassure his posts, for he could hear the sound of hurrying feet scrambling up toward the chapel, and knew that his shot had brought out the sergeant with the relief. In fact, the whole command was stirring uneasily about as he stumbled hurriedly down between the gloomy houses. In twenty minutes he had completed his rounds and had given the necessary orders to the detachment, who were to leave immediately under his personal direction for the forced march around Concepcion's position. Delighted with the promise of an adventure, they were growling good-naturedly, *sotto-voce*, some forty strong, lined up in front of the headquarters as he returned. They were still shifting straps and buckling on belts, but they had made a lightning response to their orders.



"INTERFERENCE."

"Where did Lieutenant Turenne have the prisoner taken for examination, men?"

Two or three shadowy figures nearest him replied: "Down at the bridge, sir."

With a low exclamation of dismay Heart wheeled, hurried through the wondering men, and down the street toward the northern end of the town where he remembered crossing a bridge but a few minutes before. Thirty seconds of rapid walking and he had reached the spot, his fears being more than realized as he sharply halted and leaned over the stone parapet.

Just below him on the bank of the stream a soldier of Turenne's detachment was mothering a small fire at the water's edge. The rain was sputtering into it, but it gave enough light to enable the young commander to make out not only Turenne, but Henry and Smith, standing absorbed in its glow, gazing out over the surface of the little stream at a tableau of exacting interest. Three soldiers were splashing uncertainly about in the current, which ran waist-high where they stood, struggling to immerse a fourth man, whose piteously protesting voice whined, sputtered and shrieked in agonized fragments of Visayan.

"For God's sake, men," called Turenne from the bank, "stop that fellow's noise. You act as if you were trying to rock a baby to sleep. Hold him *under*, can't you!"

The sarcasm apparently bit into the struggling men. They gripped their victim by arms and legs, and pinned him remorselessly down beneath the bubbling water, his eyes rolling in terror, his last cry choked in the foam of the struggle and his muscles relaxing in despair.

"Take that man out on the bank!"

It was the vibrant voice of Heart from the bridge above. The dark figures in the water below stared up at him in amazement, and an angry voice called up from the fire:

"Why, Lieutenant, you don't understand, sir. We're giving him the water cure. He won't open up any other way.

"I understand, Lieutenant Turenne," snapped Heart swiftly. "That is why I stopped you, sir. Hurry there, men! Get that Filipino to the shore and pump the water out of him."

As the men lifted their now limp burden up and started slowly in toward the fire, Lieutenant Turenne ran hastily up into the road and met his superior half-way as he left it to descend.

"Your pardon, sir," he said angrily, yet cautiously lowering his voice so that his brother officers, a dozen paces back, might not hear his words. "Your pardon, sir, but I wish to know why you interfere here. Those who know Jack Turenne best agree that he doesn't forget an insult."

Heart looked up at the stalwart figure towering above him in the road.

"I regret having had to interfere, Turenne," he answered calmly. "It certainly must seem strange to you, for we've done this sort of thing together many times."

"Then, in the name of decency, what did you do it for?" Turenne's voice was rising with impatience.

"Because I don't believe any more in the torturing of prisoners, sir."

Turenne mixed a laugh with a sneer.

"Pardon my laughter," he said with mock politeness. "I had heard of your remarkable conduct of late, but I didn't realize that you had sunk to the level of idiocy—"

"You forget your uniform, Lieutenant Turenne," said Heart coldly.

"Not at all. I was only about to say that I consider myself most grossly insulted by your interference with this examination. You are my senior and in command here. I was trying to help you by obtaining information from a spy caught in the very act of betraying us. Yet I am

made the laughing-stock of my own men. Until to-night I have called you my friend. I cannot see my way clear to do so from this night on. May God protect Jack Turenne from the friendship of an impertinent old maid!"

"I am a true enough friend of yours to allow your words to go unresented," returned Heart, calm with an evident effort. "For there is an excuse for you under the circumstances. Perhaps I can prove my sincerity at least. Step with me to the fire, please."

The four privates of Turenne's scouts had, in obedience to Heart's orders, worked over the exhausted, half-drowned Visayan, and had just succeeded in bringing him to semi-consciousness. They bolstered him up against a tree and sullenly saluted as Heart approached the fire, where Smith and Henry had stood, uncomfortably conscious of the quarrel in progress above them.

"I have a few words to say to you all," Heart said firmly. "It is for you men here as well as your officers. I interfered with this examination to-night because I can no longer sanction the torturing of prisoners. At one time, and not a remote time either, I suffered no qualm of conscience. Of late, however, I find myself unable to reconcile this practice of repeatedly drowning and resuscitating a man until he divulges his secrets, with either the rules of civilized warfare or the high traditions of our service."

He turned to the prisoner as he spoke, his eye rapidly traveling over the pitiable wet figure. The blood from the wound caused by Anton's rifle butt was renewing its trickling.

"No, no more violence," he ended sternly, bending more closely over the spy. "Who is this 'Khakiak,' Monty? Something seems familiar about his face. Ever see him before?"

In response to the question, Lieutenant Smith knelt

down and turned the face of the faintly breathing man toward the smouldering fire.

"Here, one of you, help me turn him. And one of you stir that fire up a little," he directed.

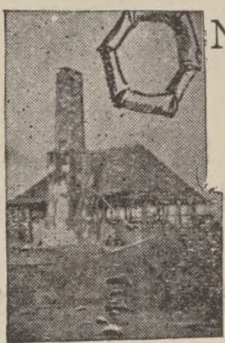
A private threw on a handful of dry leaves which flashed a moment's defiant flame up into the rainy night, and outlined clearly the form and face of the prisoner; a powerful frame for a Visayan, and a strong, square face, handsome in spite of its bloodiness. For a full half-minute the group waited while Smith searched keenly, feature by feature, the countenance of the prostrate one. "Hey, 'hombre,' open your eyes. 'Pronto'!"

In languid response the man's eyelids parted, and he stared uncomprehendingly into his enemy's face. As he did so Smith grinned appreciatively.

"Why, we have met an old friend to-night, Lieutenant Heart. This is Patricio, *our* Patricio—the official interpreter of Alcala!"

X

A RED TICKET TO ILOILO



ONE o'clock in the morning, and the forty men of the flanking column slipped out of the back trail from Ignotan, as soft of foot and silent of tongue as the Forty Thieves of Bagdad. The rain had stopped, but the trail wound over hills of clay, and the marching was no child's task. Had the darkness permitted a close inspection, the command would have shown a significant lightness of equipment. Every man was on his own sturdy legs, from the commander down to the Hospital Corps private at the rear of the line, and carried nothing save rifle, canteen, cartridge-belt and first-aid packages. Even "khaki" blouses had been left in a pile at Ignotan, and blue flannel shirts were open at the throat. Their only haversacks were their pockets, crammed with hard-tack and "Army chicken."

Heart, at the head, picking his way as by instinct toward Calvary barrio, where the command was to turn south for its long swing around Concepcion's position, felt more and more at peace with himself as he put the scene of his quarrel with Turenne farther and farther behind him. Although showing but little emotion during the episode, his interruption of the water-cure and the ensuing words with his subordinate had disturbed him greatly.

"They all think I am a fool, I suppose," he ruminated bitterly. "I almost feel I am one myself. Why should I

try to apply a quixotic, sentimental principle to this abominable bush-whacking warfare against the pirate blood of the human race? As to Turenne, let him go. Hilton will be glad to know that I've quarreled with him. But, anyway, I couldn't help myself. I must be getting chicken-hearted, for when I looked down from that bridge and caught a glimpse of that rascal Patricio's face as they put him under the last time I simply couldn't stand it. Well, avaunt! There's trouble ahead, and I don't think that I have forgotten how to fight."

The resentful howling of dogs at half-past three marked their arrival at the ruins of Calvary. The moon was sifting through the breaking clouds, and etched out the desolate scene in its black details of charred uprights, fallen, heat-shriveled thatches now sodden with the night's rain, and scarred stumps of banana palms making a ragged edge to the muddy trail. The inhabitants had quite generally followed the troops into Ignotan the previous afternoon, but a group of the bolder spirits had remained, and, aroused by the barking of the dogs, gathered spectrally around the Lieutenant as he halted his men for a breathing spell.

Selecting a couple to act as guides he again started on, swinging his command into a yet more difficult trail, leading in a southerly direction, and, helped by the friendly moon, soon left the snarling curs of Calvary out of hearing, winding away into the mysterious silver light and ebony shadows of a densely grown upland.

"If we can only cross the Kaytan River and get into position in his rear before the firing begins," he thought, quickening his pace and reaching out for a rifle under which one of the weaker men was beginning to stumble. "If we only *can*, Concepcion is ours! Hope Turenne doesn't precipitate the affair. It would be just like him to do it."

The next rise brought them the murmur of the Kaytan's shallow water, its music floating gratefully up to them on

the freshening night wind. A half-hour later and they waded cheerfully across it, and buried themselves again in the steep ravines of the Antigue foothills, burrowing steadily on into the west. Then, as the moon began to pale with the competition of a growing dawn-light behind them, they exultingly halted on a spur and breathed heavily, their eager eyes fixed on the last stretch of their journey, a "carabao" trail meandering from their feet off into the shadowy hill-folds to the northeast. Somewhere between them and Ignotan they felt assured grim old Concepcion was lying with his men, perhaps stirring about in the gray mists and preparing for a quick swoop on the barrio, little dreaming of the approaching wrath behind him. If that flame conversation had been interrupted in time all would go well with Company I.

The detachment had scattered out among the scanty scrub-pines on the knoll, and, as the light increased, strained their eyes toward Ignotan and the dawn. Their position was commanding, and they felt sure of seeing the chapel tower when the sun arose. Meanwhile, to the young commander at least, the scenery itself, even though without a hint of friend or foe, was not lacking in fascination. The night's march had circled him well up into the lower ranges, and the billowing hills below him were already a vast battle-ground of greater forces than his own puny men or his dark-visaged enemies. The darkness, intrenched on the mountains at his back, was being routed by the early glow of the coming day in front of him, and the hills seemed huge earthworks, with ragged forests for flaunting banners. The steaming mists, hanging blanketlike in the ravines, furnished the smoke of contending batteries. The birds, too, added to the militant conception, trilling and chittering as the red sun-fingers reached up over the far away horizon line—they seemed to be the faint happy bugles of the victorious orb of day. And hardly had their heralding become con-

tinuous when the glowing disk itself slipped an upper edge into view, and all at once the detachment of infantrymen found themselves in a blaze of orange light, their high rendezvous having caught the first rays, while still below them stretched for miles the unbroken shadows.

The Lieutenant raised his glasses, but not at the faintly appearing tower of Ignotan, for the singing of the birds and the stir of the morning air had in some occult way diverted him from the business in hand, and he leveled the double tube off toward Iloilo, dreaming of a pair of grey eyes now hidden under slumbrous lids beneath the mission roof in Jaro.

Delaney, the obvious, the brave, interrupted his thoughts.

"You'll pick it up a little more to the north, Lieutenant. The sun ain't touched it yet, but I can make it out with me eye, sir."

The officer started.

"Oh, Ignotan, you mean? Why, yes, it is in sight, isn't it? Get the men ready, Delaney. We ought to hit Concepcion's camp on that second ridge, not more than a mile away. No bugle, please. Pass the word."

Sixty seconds, and the hill-crest was bare, while northward, in the shadowy "carabao" trail, went forty exponents of the strenuous life—alert, fight-hungry. A half-mile, and the increasing light revealed a more open country ahead, the trail leaving the bamboo growth and winding out over a comparatively bare ridge, slippery with the dewy pampas grass.

"Halt!"

The jingling, straining line drew up to its halted head and breathed heavily.

"Now, Delaney, cock your ear eastward. Do you hear anything?" Heart's voice was super-cheerful.

There was an instant of dying noises among the men, then came a second of dead silence, and then—ah, there

could be no mistake about it!—then came out of the East the sharp crack of far-away Mausers, and the reverberating bang of Remingtons and Springfields. First a few isolated shots, then a trill of them, sounding in the distance for all the world like a bunch of discharging firecrackers and penny torpedoes.

The halted men stirred uneasily, bending their heads at varying angles to catch the first sound of the grim game in which they were soon to take a hand. They were for the most part veterans, and the distant firing was a merry tonic to them. Their haggard faces lit cheerfully. A half-dozen, however, were recruits. Those far-away poppings were their introduction to real war, and marked their graduation from rookydom into veteran distinction and privileges. Only a "powder-diploma" could make them feel entirely at ease among their barrack mates. They spat nervously into the trail, and furtively watched the calm face of their officer. He was chewing a twig and smiling as he listened, and it reassured them to behold him.

Out of the East came a longer, a more insistent crackling. It cheered Delaney immensely, for he had chased over delusive trails many a weary mile after the "illustrious" Concepcion, and had obtained neither shot nor sight for his pains.

"We sure struck it right this time," he contributed. "Must have his whole outfit along, sir."

"Sounds that way," responded Heart, trying hard to keep an exultant note from his voice. "We'll find them at it just beyond the ridge. Watch the 'rookies' when the firing begins. We've no reserve ammunition. Nothing is to be wasted. We must sweep up everything in the landscape between here and Ignotan. Now let's get into this on the double."

As if to emphasize his decision a long-sustained succession of Remington and Mauser reports crowded into a heavy

volley from over the ridge, and the detachment, spreading fan-wise as it leaped ahead into open order, swept over the wet grass at an eager double. But even as it did so, it found a niche in its mind for amusement, and laughed broadly, appreciatively, at a luckless sprawl by Kleinstuk. This occurred at the crown of the ridge, and so it was with a unanimous grin parting their hard-set faces that the forty flankers went over the dip and down into the death-debate before them.

Heart was happy to his very soul of souls. Was there anything in the world to equal the joy of handling good troops in real action? he asked himself, as the blue blouses raced at either side of him. Was there any music in all the German scores so stirring as the thud of human feet at the double, and the jingle of accoutrements? Did any gambler at Monte Carlo ever taste for a single second the delicious uncertainty that now was his at the prospect of the game of "Who Dies To-day"? Add to this the grasp for fame, the possible after-glow of attainment, and who would not envy him, a humble line officer of the Fifty-fifth Infantry!

As the line plunged over the ridge the chess-board had come into view, a rolling, grassy plain, with here and there jutting rocks, the town of Ignotan rising beyond it in the green of bamboos and palms, and in the foreground the skirmish in feverish progress around a clump of low buildings which Heart recognized as the sugar "hacienda" and mill reported by Delaney the night before. From its walls came a succession of sharp, snapping reports. Around it flashed a swaying, irregular line of insurgent riflemen. Stray bullets now pinged angrily over the heads of the flankers, and spent slugs fluttered on the ground as they ran on.

"It's like—taking—money—from—a baby." Delaney jounced the words out as he ran at Heart's side. "They

—ain't—seen us—yet. Can—we begin—to play on 'em, sir?"

The Lieutenant jerked his head in acquiescence, a bugle sputtered, "Begin firing!" and an instant later forty demons



THE CHARGE OF COMPANY I.

spitting fire rolled into Concepcion's patriots and things were done which no man's eye might follow and no man's tongue describe.

Mowed down from the rear by the fire of the unexpected detachment, the Visayans turned for a few bloody, dogged seconds to argue with rifle and bolo, and then, releasing their grasp of the desperately defended mill and "hacienda," where Turenne had come to his last cartridges, they broke and fled in all directions, throwing away their useless rifles, and leaving behind them their leader and some fifty others, dead, wounded or prisoner, as the detritus of the conflict.

It was a neat little victory, and the American loss was light. Wilson, Howard, and O'Hearne dead and a dozen men wounded, four of them seriously enough to worry over. These latter were gathered into the shade of the old sugar mill and stretched out around the rusty cane crusher, for the sun was now blindingly victorious.

Here, too, gradually drifted the scattered units of the two triumphant companies, panting, sweaty, talkative; some

of them bringing in wounded Visayans and reassuring them in mongrel Spanish; others, Smith in command of them, guarding a nondescript group of prisoners; and still others inquiring for missing comrades. A skillful little group, under direction of the Hospital Corps detail, were tenderly handling the unfortunates inside the mill. Another group began hastily to prepare bamboo litters, assisted by neutral Visayans from Ignotan and Calvary, who were beginning to flock over the field carrying tubes of water to refresh the combatants. Turenne and Henry chatted nonchalantly in the shade of the "hacienda" wall with a gray-haired, burly Visayan, the famous guerilla chieftain, General José Concepcion, now gathered in at last, and stolidly answering the polite queries of his captors in monosyllables.

Out of the upland to the West sounded the last desultory shots of the skirmish, Delaney and a handful of privates practising on far-away, climbing Visayans, whose light, fluttering uniforms showed occasionally in their flight.

Heart, standing in the sun at some distance from the mill, was receiving a report of casualties from his first sergeant.

"For goodness' sake, Martin," he said pettishly, "send a man over to Delaney and stop that firing. No, go yourself. I don't want those poor devils shot down after they've thrown away their arms."

With a look of surprise Martin sprang away in obedience, Heart watching him a moment, and then walking slowly toward the shade of the buildings. He felt dull and stupid. The excitement of the fight had departed, and, in spite of the brilliance of his little victory and the significance of his capture of Concepcion, he felt little elation. Two of the dead soldiers were of his own company. Wilson he had been especially fond of. His eye, too, noticed the dead bodies of the Visayan soldiery flung by the ruthless conflict into awkward, unnatural attitudes over the

pampas grass about him. He stopped and bent over a brown body at his very feet, clad in the conventional cheap striped cotton uniform of the insurgent army. The slender body looked pitifully slight, and the heavy Remington at its side made it appear even more so. As he glanced in pity at the blood-soaked thigh and waved the gathering flies from the wound, a convulsive jerk of the body told him of the presence of life, and he shouted to nearby Filipinos to help him as he carefully bound up the wound with a first-aid bandage. A minute more, and the insurrecto was being carried into the shade. Heart waited long enough to direct that no wounded man be overlooked, and then entered the mill to inspect the suffering of his own command.

For the most part these were able to greet him cheerfully. Macklin, whose arm had been smashed with a slug, informed him that all he needed on earth was a good Isabella cigar. Casey was frank enough to ask for a drink of "tuba." Kleinstuk, a bullet through his cheek and several teeth missing, made a desperate attempt to grin. But Heart knew their agonies of lacerated muscle and splintered bone.

"You've done a good morning's work, men. We'll start you back to Doc Hilton on litters shortly," he said. "Keep a stiff upper lip for a few hours, and you'll taste fancy 'grub' at the Brigade Hospital. Remember, there's a detail of American women down there who know how to patch you up in short order."

Smith had followed his superior into the mill. As Heart bent over Macklin to examine his bandaged arm, the junior officer saw a spreading red stain on the breast of his blouse.

"Why, Lieutenant, you are hit yourself, sir!" he said anxiously, seizing his arm. "Look at this spot here on your coat."

"Oh no, I think not," said Heart in surprise. I must

have gotten that blood from the wounded Visayan I was bandaging up."

"Not a bit av it, sorr," said Macklin, forgetting his own wound, and raising himself from the floor. "It's spreading fast. It's your own blood, sorr. Better lie down an' let Bonesy fix ye aisy."

More amused than alarmed, Heart allowed himself to be lowered by Smith and the hospital steward to a reclining position. But as his body doubled in the process he felt a piercing pain in his left side, and with difficulty repressed a scream of agony. Large drops of sweat stood out on his face, and he fell back on the blanket placed for him faint and suffering, while eager hands threw open his blouse and the shirt beneath, and anxious eyes stared at a blood-bubbling gash in the white flesh dangerously near the heart.

"The real thing, Monty?" queried the sufferer.

A bandage flashed in Smith's hand as he answered, keeping the tell-tale anxiety from his voice with an effort.

"Oh, it's good for a free ride to Iloilo Hospital, all right, sir. You're in great luck to get that. This bandage make you a little easier? Good. Now keep as quiet as possible while we rig up a litter for you."

"Heavens! Monty, I've got to interview old Concepcion and see after the men," protested the Commander.

"Concepcion is willing to postpone the interview," answered Smith crisply. "We'll see he gets behind the bars of Fort Iloilo without any 'slip twixt the cup and the lip.' We'll look after the boys, too. Now, you're fixed pretty well, but for heaven's sake, Lieutenant (here Smith's voice leaked his fears in spite of himself), "don't work this bandage loose until Hilton can see to you."

XI

THE HERO FINDS A FAIR CONFESSOR



EART was ruminating as he lay motionless in the rude little room just off the surgical ward of the Brigade Hospital. It was just as Hilton had said, he thought to himself, there was something infinitely reassuring about the hospital atmosphere, an equal mixture though it was of chloride of lime, iodoform and carbolic acid. Taken together with the spotless floors, the jingle of spoons in glasses, and the flutter of uniformed nurses, it suggested the beneficent mysteries of modern science wedded to old-fashioned feminine sympathy and helpfulness.

Yes, it was certainly good to be just where he was, for, though weeks of suffering and more than one sharp crisis had marked his long siege, it had been a period of rare revelation to his own soul—self-revelation first of all, but no less a revelation of the riches of skilled and unskilled kindness in the hearts of men. Had not Hilton vacillated at great cost of convenience and no little personal danger between Iloilo and his work at Alcala? One day he would be found dosing Company I, the next fanning the flies from Heart's coverlet. Dear old Monty had likewise been devoted, although held more closely to Alcala affairs. In fact, the first days of his convalescence were proving a continual levee. Every officer of his own or other regi-

ments in or near Iloilo seemed eager to pay his respects to the popular captor of the notorious Concepcion. Turenne, it is true, was an exception. But, to offset his non-appearance, both his junior officer Henry, and Whitney, the correspondent, came in to congratulate him. Then, too, the little General had come not once but thrice, winking cheerfully each time as he left, and saying "Lucky dog" in a way which could mean nothing less than a good report sent higher up and a prospect of promotion. And then there had been the Army nurses, with their tender, flying, skilful hands and their potent smiles and their comforting neatness and home-likeness. The doctors of the Brigade staff, from Surgeon-Major Carter, who looked like a German specialist, down to little red-haired Acting-Assistant O'Connell, who resembled a caddy on a golf links put suddenly into uniform, had one and all combined their skill and bluff kindness on him. Best of all had come the visit of the Rev. Davidson Duval, large of body, grave of spirit, gentle of speech, bringing his own tribute of genuine solicitude, and a hint of Some One Else in his deep gray eyes and his clear cut features.

"And I mustn't forget the Company," Heart thought on, "Let me see: Macklin is responsible for that bouquet, and Delaney for those magazines, and Anton the Queer for that New Testament. Strange his mind should have run in *that* direction! Kleinstuk smuggled me in a chunk of cheese the day my life was despaired of, and Martin spends half his pay on mangos and monkey-chicos. Dear old Company I."

Truly the hard, suffering weeks which had woefully drawn his face and wasted his body had, nevertheless, opened up to him a world hitherto undiscovered in the souls of those about him. He felt that he could never again be cynical or pessimistic regarding his kind.

Not less certainly had the period of his illness been a self-revelation. He had found plenty of time for mental

and spiritual inventory, while staring for hours at a stretch at the rude white-washed ceiling above him in the quiet of his separate ward, and he had conscientiously reviewed himself from his childhood in the old Michigan home up through his school years, his studies in the Art Institute, his essays at fame with his brush in the modest little studio, his entrance into the Army, and his career thereafter. Although naturally averse to introspection, the long days of his convalescence meant a close analysis of his life, and an attempt in all seriousness to judge of the worthiness of the principles, motives, ambitions which had hitherto inspired him. He found it a puzzling and difficult process, the more so as he felt himself coming inexorably to an unpleasant and startling conclusion. After making all possible allowance for the high ideals which attracted him at first, both in Art and in Arms, he faced the unwelcome truth that his career on the whole, since coming to maturity, had been dictated by a profound selfishness—a selfishness more subtle than the ordinary brand, more decently clothed, more socially acceptable, yet a pure, unadulterated self-seeking nevertheless. If for a few passing hours in his passion for Art he had become lost to the desire for personal advancement and recognition, he knew that such times had been emphatically rare. And in his military life, as well, he felt in his soul that, though he had entered the service in a burst of generous feeling toward the Cuban “reconcentrados,” he had been sadly eaten into by poorer motives and lower passions. Could he say that he had always served in an austere devotion to Duty, to Country? Had he never yielded to personal pride, to hate, to petty self-seeking, to jealousy, to indolence, to dissipation? How much of his very devotion had sprung from a desire for recognition! True, one sweet, fresh, unselfish element had stolen into his life of late and was changing him for the better, bringing him back to the best in his past thinking

and stimulating him to rise higher. But this was no comfort to him. It was an influence from without, and came to him from a life which he knew to be the exact opposite of his own motive and practice.

Such a line of thought led him to sum up the spiritual aspects of his life into sentences which often recurred in his mental processes. "I cannot in candor allow anything better of myself than that at times I have been delivered in part from serving my own interests only. Mine has been a dark life with bright spots. *As a life* it has been *grossly selfish*. The welfare of friends, the advancement of Art, the honor of the Flag—these have been incidental to my career, not fundamental. I must be what old drunken Chaplain Tully would call 'a sinner.' I suppose he gets his definitions from the Bible. I feel tempted to see if a book which can diagnose can also suggest a remedy. But if it could, how about Tully? Surely he needs a cure badly, and knows his Bible thoroughly. Yet he remains a drunkard, as selfish in his way as I am in mine. What hope, then, is there for me? Perhaps I shall find my riddle answered and my life made free from the ever-present, blighting shadow of self by the power of that sweet passion whose stirrings I feel within me, making me both miserable and thrice blessed by turns."

But such conclusions always led him to eventual pettishness, bringing him again and again to the one restless longing of his weeks of sickness—a hunger to behold again the face of Grace Duval. She had not come to see him, and he realized that there was no conventional opening for such a step on her part. She had met him at noon on a certain day six months before, had had a disagreeable conversation with him on missions and religion in the afternoon, had written him a note that night allowing of no answer, and had doubtless by this time forgotten the entire encounter. How could she know that her eyes, her voice, a few sen-

tences of her simple philosophy, had changed his life and held his imagination so in thrall that merely to think of her face, her figure, her intonations, caused his heart to beat more quickly and his sunken cheek to flush? Why should she come in from Jaro and her work just to smile upon his sick-bed?

It must have been at least the one-thousandth time that he had come to this mournful conclusion when a miracle happened to him as real as any he had ever been taught in his Sunday-school days. The door of his room opened, and a white-clad figure stood uncertainly upon the threshold.

The doorway was not in sight from where he was lying, for his bed faced the one window, and he was still too stiff from bandages to turn easily. He heard the door open, however, and a strange trembling seized him at the sound of a light step. He somehow knew that it was not the usual nurse.

"This is the missionary, Miss Duval," chanted the voice of his past five months' dreaming. "May I come in?"

Heart's tongue clicked in a suddenly parched mouth. It was a marvel that he could marshal even the most conventional response.

"Certainly. Most kind of you to come," he said nervously, afraid that he was building the baseless fabric of a dream as he saw her step cheerily across the room, draw a chair near the foot of his cot, and daintily seat herself, regarding him with unmistakable eyes of pity.

"My brother suggested that I might be of some possible service to you, Lieutenant. However, I knew the nurses here needed no help from inexperienced me. I really came to thank you for your splendid act of mercy toward our old deacon, Domingo. You doubtless know how we all rejoiced, but I felt that I had the right to come myself and thank you."

"It was only justice," the young officer said faintly, his intense eyes devouring her face.

"No, I insist it was mercy," she smiled. "And when we think that we are, indirectly at least, the cause of your long suffering here, it makes us all eager to assure you that we are not ungrateful. The prayers of our simple peasant membership have not failed to include your name through all your illness."

"Thank you, Miss Duval," responded Heart, flushing. "Old Domingo quite won my heart. To have his prayers is a high honor. I certainly need prayer, or something else more potent than my own unaided strength of mind and will."

She looked at him quite gravely. "It is splendid of you so frankly to say so," she said at last.

"Not at all. I'm just selfish enough to want deliverance from myself. It will be six months to-morrow since I so signally failed in courtesy to you at Alcala. Now don't expostulate. My conscience has burned me for my boorishness ever since. Well, it was doubtless easy for you to place me religiously at that time. To-day, thank God, I am different. I am not a Christian, Miss Duval, but I am at least a man convinced of the need of a higher, a better, a less material life. I have 'passed myself in review' and find the parade a failure. I am going to admit that it was my encounter with you at Alcala which started me seriously to thinking of the responsibility of an altruistic, an unselfish life. I have even tried to live such a life since I last saw you. But my trying only proved to me, what no doubt both you and your brother knew at a glance long ago, namely, the fact that I was what preachers call 'a sinner' and what I myself call a thoroughly selfish man. Now, having started me off religiously, I'm going to ask you a further favor. You are a Christian woman, Miss Duval. Can Christianity

give me deliverance from the littleness, the pettiness, the shame of selfish living?"

The young missionary hesitated an instant before answering.

"I know the philosophers have a great deal to say about the inevitableness of selfish living, but I cannot feel as they do," she said slowly. "I'm afraid that my best answer to your question must come from my own life."

"If you would only condescend," he said wistfully.

"Simply this, then, Lieutenant Heart. A few years ago I passed through an experience doubtless similar to the one you are now having—I mean mentally. I had lived the usual life of a 'society girl,' as my little city defined it, and when I sought deliverance from its narrowness, its dull selfishness, I found peace only in consecration to the Master. Since knowing him, and endeavoring to do his will in my own life and the circle of my influence, I have found a most real deliverance from my old slavery to self. Non-Christians would doubtless explain it all psychologically, but I cannot make it less than a visitation of God's grace. To think of my old dissatisfied existence and my new, abounding gladness in his service makes me wish that all might share the same rich blessings I am privileged to enjoy."

He looked at her earnestly.

"I presume, then," he resumed after a moment of quiet, "I presume that you have all confidence in the Bible? You know, Anton, one of my men, sent me up one the other day. I've even been reading it a little."

"Yes, to the Christian the Bible is infinitely precious. Not for its own sake, however. As I understand it, sir, things are not true because they are in the Bible, but things are in the Bible because they first were true. Thus the Bible has proven the gateway of life eternal to men. It has preserved to us the knowledge of our Lord."

"Don't think me brutal, Miss Duval, if I say that I can

no longer accept the Bible as my dear mother so firmly did, and as you yourself seem to do. I'm not well informed on the matter, but isn't it true that the new historical criticism has brought the Bible into the realm of legend and literature, or at least corrupted history? You see Jonah and the Whale, the Serpent in the Garden, and the Plagues of Egypt, and all that kind of thing, are pretty hard for a practical mind to relish."

He had spoken somewhat anxiously, not willing to offend. She surprised him by a transitory but undeniable look of amusement.

"I think we all have our epoch of doubt, usually during our university course," she admitted candidly. "But that meant in my own case that I merely dropped many old, vague opinions, and found in their place a few rock-firm convictions which have been as landmarks to my mental life ever since. The inspiration of God's Word has been no debatable matter with me of late. I *know* it to be inspired of him because it inspires *me* to seek the right, the heavenly things. Of course I don't worship the Bible. It asks no worship. It only asks a hearing for its wondrous message."

"And what do you consider its message to be?"

"Its message to me is simply Righteousness," she said, sweetly serious. "It is just full of both the word and the theme. In Genesis we see the need of it in the Fall, and then comes the definition of it in the Law. Then the historical books are really a struggle in an ancient nation between righteousness and unrighteousness. The Psalms and other poetical books are, it seems to me, a great soul-cry for righteousness. The prophets are all exponents of it. In the New Testament our Lord seems to make the standard of righteousness even more exacting in his great Sermon on the Mount, and then he exemplifies it perfectly in his life."

"His life was truly wonderful," said the listener.

"Then, to go on, in the Acts of the Apostles we see in some mysterious way righteousness imparted to weak, narrow, self-seeking men, and they go out to proclaim it to the world, astonishing their age by the purity of their changed lives. The Epistles ——"

"Stop just a moment there, Miss Duval," interrupted the officer with a light in his eyes which startled her. "That part about the righteousness being imparted to selfish men—that must be my part of the message. Would to God that such transactions might take place to-day! If the Christ of whom we read in the Gospels were only taking disciples to-day, I verily believe I would join myself to him. I need transforming badly enough."

"Such changes take place in every hour of time, Lieutenant," she said eagerly. "I ventured to refer to myself—my own new life. Domingo is but another evidence. I have seen it so often! The power of the Saviour is still with us to deliver some from drink, and some from doubt, and some from insidious selfishness and pride. Oh, that you would put him to the test! For, after all, it isn't a question of believing creeds, or even the Bible. The Bible is simply the sign-board pointing to the Saviour. All its prophets point forward to him, all its apostles point backward to him. I beg of you, do not quarrel with what you may think are defects in the sign-board, but heed, instead, its directions. Go to the Saviour to whom it directs you!"

She was speaking with great feeling, but suddenly checked herself and arose, extending her fresh, firm hand.

"Forgive this long conversation," she said remorsefully. "I am sure that it has been bad for you to endure so long a sermon. Ten minutes, you know, is your limit at present."

"Bad for me?" he queried, holding her hand in his long white fingers. "It has been an angel's visitation! I can-

not ask you to remain longer, but there is one thing which I do wish to request of you. It will doubtless sound strange to you, but I desire your prayers. I confess I don't believe much in others' prayers and not at all in my own. But I believe in yours, Miss Duval, and would appreciate the kindness."

Disengaging her hand, she stood for a moment at the bed-side looking down at him with a look of great joy on her face.

"My prayers will not fail to ask your life for the service of the Master," she said.

"Then would it be too hard to begin right here and now?" he asked timidly, the request amazing even his own ears.

A flush of embarrassment crossed her face, but she murmured an almost inaudible "Certainly, if you so desire," and kneeling at the cot's side with the simplicity of a child at its mother's knee, she clasped her hands, closed her eyes and softly, self-forgettingly, prayed while the young officer listened in reverent quietness:

"O blessed Saviour of men," she breathed, "thou who didst create all things by the word of thy power, create anew this hungry soul that crieth out for a better, a higher life. Deliver him from himself by so revealing thy beauty, thy glory to him that he shall be compelled to a whole-hearted abandonment to thy service. Teach him the reality of thy loving presence. Open to him the grandeur of thy will for him, and the splendor of thy great enterprises upon earth. And in him, and in me, and in all of us, may thy kingdom come and thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen."

L. OF C.

XII

THE HERO BECOMES A "GOSPEL SHARP"



TWO weeks later, on a Saturday evening, Heart was sitting *tete-a-tete* with Dr. Duval in the "sala" of the little mission house on Calle Concepcion, a little languid still, but well on his way to complete health again. He was telling the missionary that he was to start for Alcala on Tuesday morning.

"I go back to duty," he said gravely, "a well man in a dual sense."

"Praise God that you can speak so confidently," returned the host. "It has been a great joy to both of us here—your decision. You have been wonderfully led."

"It seems very wonderful to me, Dr. Duval. And yet it would have been more marvelous had your sister's prayer for me remained unanswered. In my after arguments with you, you will remember how slow my progress apparently was, how much a mental and how little an emotional one. Yet, sir, I must admit that it was not so much your answering of my various philosophical difficulties so completely nor your bringing to bear upon me the batteries of Christian evidence—unsuspectedly powerful though they were—which decided me for Christ's service, so much as the memory of that little prayer and the feeling that somehow God and the Truth were on the side of that petition. But now that I

have found the Saviour I can use the language you read me from the fourth of John this evening. 'Now I believe, not because of the speaking of the woman, for I have heard him myself, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world!'"

The strong face of the older man lit with unwonted enthusiasm.

"And yet," he cried, "there are those who speak of our Redeemer as though he were a dead Syrian teacher of ethics—he who ever liveth to transform lives and teach them the secret you are just learning! How true is the word, 'Except a man be born anew he cannot *see* the kingdom of God.' Sin has blinded the soul to its Christ. Our philosophies are godless because, as Cowper has said,

'Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally those again.'

Oh, the tragedy of human transgression! Would God I might be more endued with heavenly grace to aid in leading my fellow-men to the manhood awaiting them in Christ!"

"One man at least knows the power of your witness," broke in the officer. "I wrote mother to-day and told her of my decision for the Christian life. You know she used even to dream of my becoming a minister some day, and her heart will be full of gratitude to both you and your sister. Well, Doctor, you are doubtless busy with your preparation for to-morrow's services. I am going to leave now, but have promised myself the privilege of looking in at your service to-morrow in Jaro. I must see old Domingo again, and you have promised me some Filipino singing to American melodies."

"Come by all means. The second service is at seven o'clock, and your presence will please everyone. The mission house in Jaro is just at the entrance to the market-place." The missionary arose and followed his guest to the

door. "Is this your 'carromatta' waiting here? You must not tax your strength by walking too much."

The officer went down the steps, awakened his "cochero," entered his rig and reached out for a parting grip of the missionary's hand. A moment later he was rattling off to his quarters at the Officers' Club, looking wistfully back at the upper windows of the mission-house, where a light hinted the presence of Grace. He had not seen her since the day of her prayer. She had on the following day sent her brother to him, and his religious crisis had come to him and had been bravely and sanely met with the help of that sympathetic, large-hearted, cultured man, his doubts met with the overwhelming facts of historical and experimental Christian evidence. He had come gradually to a place where the decision for the Christian life became absolutely necessary, if he were to retain his singleness of heart and act in accordance with the light received. Moving forward in the compelling inspiration of this reflection, he came rejoicingly to know Christianity as a personal relationship to a Redeemer rather than an acceptance of creeds or an attempted practice of maxims. This secret revealed to him, he had entered into a peace, a gladness, a deliverance from self, which had transformed all things to him. Old things had indeed passed away, and all things become new. He felt eager at once to apply to practical life the energy of his new devotion and the wisdom of his new point of view.

Only a few days after his religious crisis had been met in victory he was allowed to leave the hospital, and had taken advantage of the few days remaining to him at Iloilo to call at the mission-house on Calle Concepcion, where Miss Duval and her brother made their home, although their public work was largely at Jaro, a quaint little town three miles to the north. Twice, in fact, he had called, hungry of heart to see Grace. But she had on both occasions been in Jaro, and

to-night, not finding her in the "sala" with her brother. he had not had the courage to ask for her.

"Never mind," he said to himself hopefully, "to-morrow is Sunday. In the morning I'm going to Tully's service. But in the evening I shall surely see her in Jaro."

His driver soon drew him up at the Club, and, ignoring the inviting group of fellow-officers in its buffet, he passed up to his room and slept as soundly as a lover might.

At nine in the morning, in accordance with his resolution, he arrayed himself in a freshly laundered uniform and hunted up the official religious service of Iloilo, in the band-room of the barracks. Here he surprised by his presence a depressingly thin attendance of worshipers, mainly privates and "non-coms" from the two companies of infantry, the band and the light battery, which constituted the garrison of the post. A civilian employé in white and one other officer beside himself constituted the only exceptions. The officer, he noted, was no less a person than General Mercer Hugelot himself.

As he entered the rudely seated room Chaplain Tully was announcing the first hymn and a soldier was officiating at a small "folding organ." As he took his seat the Chaplain looked up from his hymn-book, and, seeing him, raised his eye-brows in surprise.

"Religion must be at a low ebb in Iloilo when the Chaplain is so shocked at a new listener's appearance."

With this reflection he used his fine voice heartily in the hymns, and listened earnestly to a perfunctory "sermonette" by the Chaplain, trying hard as he did so to forget the well-known moral delinquencies of the speaker, whose genuine largeness of heart was offset by an increasing tendency toward alcoholism. "Old Pelican," Smith frequently called him, with some little reason for the analogy.

The text was, "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and the Chaplain soon found himself able to

climb into a patriotic peroration and end with some glittering sentences of cheap oratory. He then stopped and prepared to announce the last hymn. As he did so, controlled by some power outside of himself apparently, Heart rose in his place and caught the leader's eye. Hearing the slight noise of that act the audience turned in their chairs and looked at the young officer in amazement.

"If the Chaplain will kindly permit," said Heart quietly, but conscious of a thumping heart, "I should like to say a sentence or two before the service terminates."

"Why, certainly, brother, certainly," said Tully as the Lieutenant paused. "Anything that you may have in mind, sir."

"It will take but a moment. I came over here this morning to let you know that I have recently decided to become, in the imagery of our text this morning, a soldier of Jesus Christ. In the service of our country it is essential that we assume a uniform and let all know of our allegiance. I feel that it is even more emphatically necessary in this spiritual conflict which rages in and around us. I have accepted the will of Christ as my life hereafter. I want you all to know of it. And if I can ever help any man here or elsewhere to the same decision it will be a great privilege to me. That is all, I think, Chaplain. Thank you for the opportunity."

Heart sat down amid absolute silence. The Chaplain cleared his throat.

"I, too, have a word more to say," he said, nervously removing his spectacles, and looking with unusual directness toward his auditors. "And it is a little hard for me to say it. What our noble young brother, Lieutenant Heart, has just said has been an arrow in my soul. Yes, I, a chaplain in the United States Army for twenty-two years, stand convicted this morning in my own conscience of being an unworthy servant of Jesus Christ. And I want to be just as brave as my brother here, and say that I intend by the

grace of God to be a better one from this day forward."

The tears were now rolling down the old veteran's cheeks, and his voice failed him from emotion. General Hugelot half rose as if to stop the humiliating confession of his long-time friend, but sank back into his seat as the Chaplain continued in a broken voice:

"I know, my brothers, I know what the whole regiment, yes, the whole brigade, says about me, that I am an old hypocrite who preaches to others, but can't keep sober myself. And of late I haven't preached much because I felt it wasn't honest to do it. I haven't any excuse for myself, and I don't want my friends to make any for me. It is true that I have helped some of the men in little ways. I've helped them to save their money. I've helped them to get their full rations, I've counseled them, visited them in hospital and buried some of them in the little cemetery. But men! I've been faithless in the great matter of living Christ before you. May God forgive me for my sin. Why, the other day I was unpacking a box from home, and what do you think they had sent me? My dead father's old saddle-bags! He was a circuit rider of the Methodist Church in the old pioneer days, and he lived like a saint and went up to meet his God with a prayer for me on his lips. I just looked at those old saddle-bags of his and I couldn't keep back the tears. And when Lieutenant Heart spoke just now it made me feel like crying out and saying, 'O God, make me the man my father was! make me the man even that I used to be! Deliver me, O Lord, from drink and indolence, for Jesus' sake.' Well, I've confessed to you. I had to do it. God's Spirit is in this room to-day. I must have peace and deliverance, and I want you all to pray for your old Chaplain. Let us arise and be dismissed."

With unusual constraint of manner the little audience broke up, deep seriousness upon most of the faces. Several went forward silently to take their Chaplain's hand, Heart

among them. The old man was still agitated. He grasped the young disciple's hand nervously but warmly, and with a look of genuine gladness.

"God bless you, Chaplain," said Heart steadily, "you've inspired us all this morning."

"God bless *you*, my lad," said the older man, putting his arm impulsively on Heart's shoulder. "The step you have just taken is a noble one. Be more faithful to your God than I have been. I feel a little sad to-day when I think of all I might have been had I remained true to the old gospel. Come over to my quarters and take lunch with me. I want to talk over a lot of things with you. And I want you to go down to the old fort with me this afternoon. Now, don't refuse me. I need you to-day, Lieutenant."

Heart laughingly acquiesced. To become a "gospel sharp" in a single day was rather of a change for him, but he began to relish it. Before starting out with the Chaplain, however, he glanced toward General Hugelot's bench, but it was empty, the Brigadier having evidently left with the departing men.

At three o'clock, in company with Tully, he rode out over the sandy promontory to the ancient stone-work known as Fort Iloilo, whose bastions served the Department of the Visayas as a military prison. The heat was intense at the gate and in the airless courtyard, and they were glad when the sergeant in command escorted them into the large, cool room where some thirty men were spending their Sunday lounging about inside the gratings. They were for the most part "bob-tailed," i.e., discharged from the service in dishonor, because of misdemeanor and crimes. During the week they were used to break stone on the streets of Iloilo. Heart had never visited the place before, and his heart was saddened by the sight of the hopeless men before him. In addition to a dishonorable discharge, which carried with it disfranchisement in civil life, some had been sentenced to a

term of years in the Government Penitentiary at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. They were being held in Iloilo only until transportation could be secured for them. "Bino," the deadly native drink, had been the ruin of the majority, their crimes running the gamut from theft to brutal murder, being mainly traceable to its influence. Only one or two showed really criminal faces, and Heart saw with pity the extreme youth of several.

"Poor lads," he thought. "Doubtless most of them enlisted with some alluring thought of foreign travels, of serving their flag, of becoming a hero and returning triumphantly up Market street at 'Frisco or Second avenue at Seattle, cheered by the thousands and buried beneath roses. But instead of being met with the honest pride of parents and the shy rejoicing love of a sweetheart, they will land on the Pacific coast in chains, be hurried across the face of the land they love in disgrace, and be hidden behind the masonry of Leavenworth prison. Meanwhile, they can break stone in the local chain gang, the butt of the Filipinos. Sin may be sweet at first; it is bitter at the last."

As the two officers entered, the more surly of the discharged men had remained lounging on the floor or listlessly stood. Several, however, sprang to their feet and saluted.

"Men," said the Chaplain, "I've been neglecting you fellows a good deal of late. I've come down here to-day to find out whether I can be of help to any of you. Now the Sergeant has granted me the privilege of seeing those of you who may desire to talk with me privately in his office. I'll be here for an hour or so, and if I can execute any little commission for you, I want you to feel free to use me. Some of you are discharged from the service, but I want to act as your chaplain still if you'll let me."

Several of the men came up and took his outstretched

hand. Some one called out of a group back in the gun-port, "Thanks, Chaplain, you're all right."

"No, I'm not. I'm not much of a Christian. But I want to help you if I can," he responded. Then drawing Heart with him, he withdrew into the adjoining office of the sergeant in command, and as one by one the wretched men sifted in to him and told him their little stories, Heart listened with an interest never before so strongly felt in the tragedies and problems of his fellows.

One or two asked the Chaplain to get them tobacco or another blanket. Others wanted him to use his influence to secure them another trial. One stalwart man wept bitterly as he told of his downfall. Another protested his innocence. Others simply told their story, hopeless of any repeal, but glad to find some one to whom they could unburden. He noted down their little commissions, promised them reading matter, tobacco and stationery, and encouraged them to hope on. In two instances he knelt down with his arm around the man and prayed with him.

In an hour and a half he was through. Two-thirds of the men had been to him.

"You've done them a lot of good, sir," said Heart. "Now if you will wait a few moments for me, I wish to see a young Filipino prisoner in here before we return to quarters."

"I've these notes to rewrite. The sergeant will take you in to see him. And then come back for me and we will take the same 'quilez' back to town." The Chaplain's face was a face of peace.

Leaving Tully at the desk busily writing, Heart, escorted by the sergeant, went out across the hot, blistering courtyard, and after a moment of delay at heavily barred doors, found himself in a room similar to the one he had just left, but in this case crowded with a quota of captured Visayan insurgents. Many of them were sleeping through their

"siesta." Others were sitting on their cots, and smoking. These arose politely and bowed at his entrance.

The sergeant spoke in Spanish.

"Where is Patricio Delgado?"

"Here, señor," responded a grave voice, and out of the tobacco haze hanging in the farther end of the room came the erstwhile interpreter of Alcala.

"This is your man, Lieutenant Heart."

"Yes, thank you, Sergeant. Now you may retire. I will rattle the door when I'm through."

Taking the hint, the sergeant saluted and withdrew, locking the door behind him.

Heart looked his former interpreter in the eye.

"Patricio, step over here a little apart from your compatriots. I've called on you to-day merely as a friend, and not as a judge or prosecutor," and he led the inscrutable Visayan to a vacant corner where a locker furnished a rude seat for them.

"A cigarillo, cavalier?" proffered the prisoner, coolly, extending a fully rolled one in his hand.

"Many thanks, but not just now, Patricio. I have an item of good news for you. Hear it first. As you understand well, your attempt to signal my disposition of forces to Concepcion that night at Ignotan made you technically a spy and subject to the most severe sentence of a martial court. Is it not so?"

"Si, señor, the fortunes of war have placed me in a precarious position, but my heart is strong within me. Your George Washington was no more a patriot than we of the Philippine Republic. Your Nathan Hale, of whom I have read, has the honor of furnishing me a precedent. Is it not so?"

The Visayan spoke for the moment without his usual courtesy of tone, and his last sentence was a veritable challenge.

Heart looked keenly at him a moment and then said:

"Patricio—Señor Delgado—I believe you to be honestly devoted to Philippine Independence. All the months you were at Alcala I knew you were there simply because of the opportunity it gave you to inform the insurgents of our forces, our habits, our plans. And, listen, I honored you for it. Not that I liked your pretense at friendship, but I admired your constancy. You and your leaders are terribly mistaken in fighting us. Some day you will acknowledge it. Meanwhile, why not fight us fairly? For my part I don't want so good an interpreter or so strenuous a patriot hung as a spy. I have some little influence at headquarters, and have used it. Your sentence has been lightened to a year's imprisonment."

For a moment the Visayan sat silently smoking. Suddenly he threw his cigarette to the ground.

"Cavalier!" he cried, "the North Americans clasp their hands when they are moved at heart. Permit me. Patricio Delgado is at last coming to believe that not all Americans are perfidious. I knew not at the time of your rescue of me from torture at Igotan. I have been informed of your humanity since. My blood and convictions compel me to be openly your enemy. Privately, I shall admire you, and my friendship will not die until I myself pass away."

His air was a trifle grandiose, but Heart believed him to be sincere. Rising with the Visayan he clasped his hand warmly, and, fearful that the ex-interpreter might proceed to embrace him 'a la espagnole,' he said his adieux hastily, after submitting to an introduction to several of the imprisoned officers present—they all seemed to hold high commissions!—and rattling the bars as a signal to the sergeant, was soon out of the cell, and in company with the Chaplain riding back to Iloilo.

XIII

SALAK-DA-KO AND THE JOLO SEA



WAS Monday afternoon, and Heart was the happiest man in the Army of the Philippines. In company with Miss Duval and old Domingo, he was seated in a "prao," and was beating across the cobalt waters of Iloilo Strait, headed for the quaint fishing village of Salak-da-ko, just opposite the port of Iloilo. As the boat careened out of the river mouth, and tacked its way free of the point, he reviewed in an ecstasy the chain of events which had throned him in gladness supernal.

At seven o'clock the previous evening he had driven out to Jaro, and had crowded his way into the Visayan audience at the Baptist chapel. He had heard with pleased wonder the singing of Visayan words to familiar old English church tunes. He had listened with warm interest to the addresses, one in Spanish by Dr. Duval, and one in Visayan by Domingo, the colporter. For a second time he had been fairly shaken by the rude force of the old man's natural oratory. After Domingo's homily, he had himself been escorted to the platform, and said a few words of good-will and Christian fellowship, which were received by vigorous hand clapping, much to his discomfiture. It was all a very informal service, but of great interest to him in all its details. He noted with surprise the apparent eagerness of the crowded audience to hear the Protestant gospel.

But his real joy had been in the presence of Grace, seated amid a bevy of Filipino girls near the platform of the chapel, her sweet voice ringing clearly in the hymns, her face turned up to him in unashamed gladness as he gave his testimony for the Master.

By a singularly happy accident, Dr. Duval's "cochéro" failed to appear at the chapel at the close of the service, and when our hero had offered a share in his own vehicle, it had been most gratefully accepted. Crowded cosily into the "quilez," and rattling away over the stones toward Iloilo, it had not been hard for the Lieutenant to refer to his nearing departure on Tuesday, and suggest that he be allowed to take the missionaries for a sail to Salak-da-ko on the morrow. It developed that they had never been on the healthful little resort-island of Guimaras, and after a moment of hesitation as they thought of the great pressure of their work, they found themselves able to accept the invitation with pleasure.

Another happy dispensation of providence had compelled Dr. Duval to fail them at the rendezvous on the Iloilo docks. An urgent call had come to attend a sick man at the dispensary, and he had sent Domingo down as a substitute and escort for Miss Grace.

With a feeling of great hypocrisy Heart had expressed his regret at the occurrence to Miss Duval, and had helped her into the staunchest little "prao" which the water-front afforded, Domingo squatting at the helm, and the owner of the boat, a Tagalog, balanced on the outrigger to windward.

Given the woman you love at your side, a glorious afternoon, a bird-like boat, and a palmy shore for an objective, and the heart of man is bound to sing. The young officer, worn though he was with his long illness, felt himself strong with a tonic not of the breeze or the sea, and looked down upon the fair woman who had won his love with an exultation of heart which only knew the single fear that she might

not be willing to return to him the richness of the passion which burned in his soul. "But God is not so cruel!" he thought instinctively. "Having led me as he has these past few months, what shall I fear? Shall I not, knowing the purity of my heart and the strength of my love, move confidently on to win her?"

When the fresher winds smote them, a mile or two from shore, and flashed silver handfuls of the salty water over the bamboo rail, they both became children with delight. The sudden spring of the quickened boat pleased them immensely, and when the owner announced a "two-man breeze," and Heart went balancing out on the outrigger to his assistance, their happiness was of the shouting order.

Their fourth tack brought them into the shelter of the limestone head near Salak, and then came to Heart the pleasure of locking fingers with old Domingo and carrying Grace unceremoniously across the shallows to the gravelly shore, where the simple fisher-folk crowded about the two in respectful curiosity. Once ashore, the afternoon went all too swiftly for both—to Grace because of the real beauties of the paths, the villages, the cliffs; to Heart, because of the delighted and grateful girl at his side. Had he known that this was her first real holiday away from the wear of the mission work for over six months, he would have appreciated even more than he did her little exclamations of interest, her side-darts into the village shops, and her sudden stops at vantage points on the cliff-trail.

At six o'clock they put off for the return trip in a world of sunset fires, flaming in a cloudless sky and reflected in an absolutely windless sea. Their glorified brown sail hung languidly to the mast, and the Tagalog and Domingo paddled rhythmically away from the beach, hoping for a favoring breath when the headland should be turned.

They were, however, disappointed, and Heart was made inwardly cheerful by the utter absence of even a capful of

wind, and they settled down to a machine-like stroke which meant a progress certain but slow, and Iloilo dock not before nine o'clock.

With surprising forethought for his sex, Heart had provided for this emergency, and now opened up a charming little napkin-covered lunch basket, the contents of which the two cheerfully spread out in the waist of the boat upon a board laid across the thwarts.

"Hong Kong, my China-boy, came down from Alcala on Saturday," he explained, as she looked at him in mock amazement. "He's studied the exacting tastes of an old bachelor so long that I ventured to bring this sample of his art with me. Hope you'll endorse him heartily. It may be half-past eight or nine before we get into the dock."

"He must be a jewel!" she said, putting the napkin into place, and daintily arranging the sandwiches and chicken. "I confess to a most unromantic hunger."

With sly artifice Heart prolonged the little meal, enjoying the sight of a woman's table-ministry for the first time in many months. Then, satisfied themselves, he became even more artful, and called both Domingo and the Tagalog from their paddles to share in the remains, while his fair guest laved her hands over the side in the rosy water.

When the two were started back to their work the Tagalog paused a moment to affix a fragment of paper to the mast to charm a wind to his assistance, eliciting a short laugh from Domingo, who had glanced at the sky to the southward, and pointed out a swiftly scudding cloud reaching up over the slowly receding shore of Guimaras.

"No need for your charm, 'maestro,' the God of heaven had already made up his mind," he said calmly in Visayan.

The four sat eyeing the rising clouds. The sun, although itself out of sight over the rim of the Jolo Sea, was still glorifying the whole range of their vision. The Antique Mountains to the northwest were islands of royal purple,

the street and harbor lights of Iloilo, three miles ahead, were winking in white scintillations against a background of indigo hills and uplands. All else was ablaze with opalescent fires.

"Oh, the moon! Isn't it a marvel of delicate beauty this evening!" cried Grace, clasping her hands in excitement as a calm, silver edge appeared over the palmy sky line of Guimaras and showed white and unfearing beneath the arch of the coming clouds, which suddenly seemed to thicken and blacken as they reached out in streaming fingers amongst the newly appearing evening stars.

Domingo had been squatting, paddle across his knees, a statue of mahogany in the stem of the "prao" steadily regarding the face of the open sea.

He suddenly pointed out into its shimmering lights.

"Big wind!" he said in English, turning to the Lieutenant, and then dipping his paddle deeply into the water at his side.

Far off on the horizon to the southwest the uncertain line between sky and sea had suddenly become clearly marked. A darkening, broadening line appeared, weaving and twisting over the surface of the water. A warm, moist puff of air struck against their faces as they watched, a breath which fluttered an instant, and then almost immediately became a steady breeze.

Impelled by a nameless dread, Heart, who had had experience in the simoons of the Jolo Sea, looked about for a paddle with which to aid the now furiously active Tagalog and Visayan. There were but the two paddles, and motioning to Domingo to take the helm, he took the old man's paddle, and put his full energy into his stroke. A glance back at Guimaras showed them to be almost midway of the Strait. The coming storm would make it impossible to return to Salak-da-ko. There was but one thing to do—try by dint of paddles and the simoon's earlier gusts to

reach the shelter of Fort Iloilo before the crisis came.

The "prao" was already moving at a good pace, its matting sail slowly distending. But the rising hope in the Lieutenant's heart died within him as the black clouds suddenly reached across the dying embers of the western sky and quenched them into the blackness of a tropic night.

As though to celebrate its victory over the light, the simoon belched forth a sudden furious gale of wind, fairly lifting the lightly constructed boat out of the water, and tearing the immense sail out of its tackle and away across the now foaming waters. The outriggers alone saved the boat from being capsized.

Instantly reduced to helplessness, with the boat utterly beyond their control and driving rapidly past the harbor lights in a bedlam of tempestuous noises, Heart relinquished his paddle and sprang to Grace's side. She had remained seated in the stern of the boat, clinging to a hempen stay, her face showing as calm as though in the mission room in Calle Concepcion.

"Too bad!" he shouted in her ear. "We'll have to stop paddling until this blows over. It's going to pour pretty soon. Let me put this rain-coat over you.

She said something in return that the wind carried away from him, but she obediently removed her hat and placed it under the seat and allowed him to wrap the flapping coat about her. It required not a little persistence successfully to fight the wind in the task, and he was filled with great exultation as he stood in the swaying boat and buttoned the coat closely under her chin. The dim light revealed her unafraid face and her blowing hair.

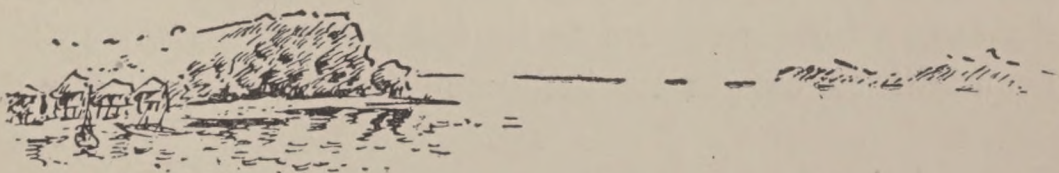
As they resumed their seats the rain began, a blinding sleet of warm water cutting horizontally across the waves at them, and shutting out for a few minutes even the alert figure of Domingo, still at the helm, and the prostrate Tagalog laid out on the deck ahead. All alone in a world of

raging waters and stinging rain, the two sat side by side, Grace clinging to the rope, and Heart venturing to put his arm at her back and grasp the rail beyond her. Her wet hair, blown free from its fastenings, was against his face, and his soul was singing like a petrel in a storm. As the liquid blackness wrapped more closely about them and they only knew of each other by the sense of touch, the utmost wrath of the simoon seemed to him but a beneficent dispensation. The loudest screech out of the China Sea was but a cheerful zephyr so long as it sounded upon them in each other's company. What cared he, even though threatened with an awful transition into eternity, if he could but go to meet his Redeemer in company with this radiant life at his side!

Suddenly they were conscious of the wind changing. The "prao" danced about in the boiling sea and raced back upon its track, shipping bucketfuls of water at every frantic leap, and shivering through every slender timber. And then occurred a miracle of good cheer—the rain abated and the moon broke an edge through the blackness of the clouds, tearing them into alternating black and white streamers, and sending a lance of soft light over the weaving, troubled waters.

Domingo suddenly gave an exclamation. "Cavalier, there is no shore!"

It was true. As far as the dim light permitted them to see, there was no sign of either Panay or Guimaras lights, only an apparently limitless flashing of threatening white-caps, stretching away on every side into a wind-filled blackness. The simoon and the treacherous currents of the Strait had conspired to carry them out into the great Jolo Sea.



XIV

A GARRISON OF TWO



OUTHWEST they drove before the wind for a good three hours or more, the "prao" twisted and strained, but still loyal to its four passengers, and, though half filled with water, buoyantly meeting the breaking swells of the abating storm. Although the water of the Jolo Sea was comparatively warm, Heart longed for the sake of his now weary and water-soaked companion for the breaking of the clouds. At about midnight he was rewarded, a cluster of stars marshaling about a now unclouded moon, and the wind dying down to an ordinary breeze. An hour later brought the sound of the surf pounding on some not far distant shore, and deflecting their course by energetic paddling, they soon made out a moon-lit sand-spit dead ahead. The combers were crashing over on to it, but Heart knew that the lightness of the "prao" made a landing a simple matter. With an infinity of hard work at the paddles they held themselves back until able to ride into the foam on the back of a princely surge, which shot them far up the glistening slant of the beach, and, though the back-wash tugged at them with an awful grip, Domingo and the officer staggered safely beyond its froth with Grace held high above their heads. The Tagalog, too, came safely in, gripping the sand with his fingers as he fell exhausted, fearing that he might be caught up bodily and thrown back into the

boiling sea. The brave little "prao" went slowly to pieces as each successive comber pounded remorselessly over it.

During the last hours of the thrilling ride Grace had hardly spoken, leaning more and more heavily against the Lieutenant's arm, straightening herself at times, and then relaxing again as if utterly weary. Putting her gently down high up under the curve of a sheltering bank, the officer and the colporter worked away on the problem of a fire.

Matches, dry and numerous, were in the Lieutenant's match-box, but to find a piece of ignitable wood was an exasperating task. A full hour was spent by the two in the hardest of labor before a stalwart flame flared up above a steaming mass of gathered drift, and the drying out process began.

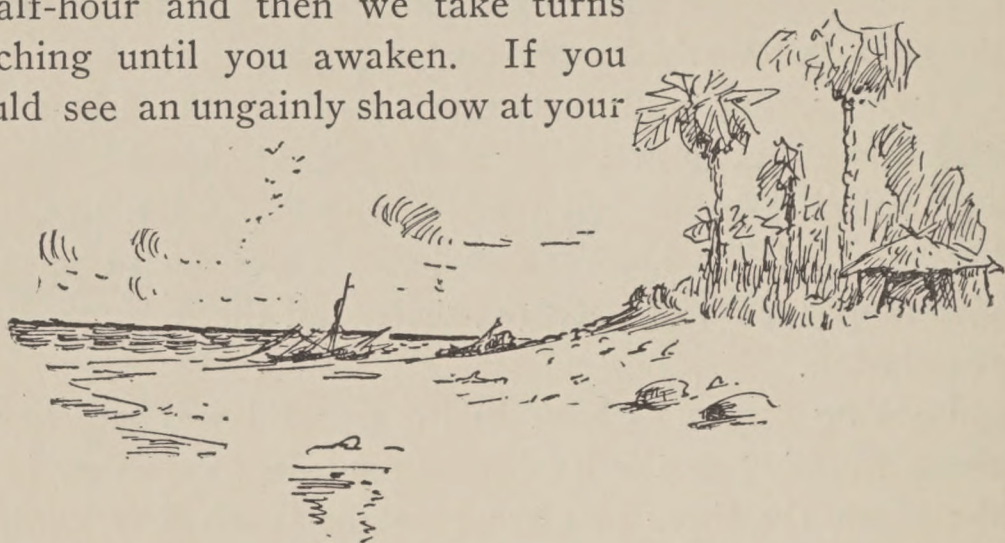
Leaving Grace to bask in its grateful warmth, her wet shoes smoking as she held them one after the other toward the blaze, the three men went up the beach fifty yards and fell to work upon a primitive shelter for her. Huge leaves, hastily thatched with twigs, soon arose on bamboo props. More bamboos were laid as a floor, and more leaves piled upon them as a bed. The morning lights were beginning to turn the velvet blackness of the eastern sky into a dull, uncertain gray before they had their task completed. With pride they put on the finishing touches, built a roaring fire just before its door, and stood an instant in critical survey. With the cocoanut palms waving over it—their huge fronds standing mysteriously out in the sudden light of the fire—the little house looked to Heart like an illustration from *Robinson Crusoe's Adventures*, and he hastened away to the sleepy little figure wrapped in his raincoat and seated at the dying embers of the first fire.

"Rest for the weary!" he cried gaily, although stiff and weak from his night's adventure. "Come with me down the beach, and into the romance of the past."

Smiling in return, she arose and went with him to the shelter, and when she saw the inviting little miniature house, the growth of a brief two hours, she clapped her hands in applause.

He prepared to leave her for needed rest.

"Now we are going to roast ourselves at the other fire for a half-hour and then we take turns watching until you awaken. If you should see an ungainly shadow at your



"The brave little 'prao' went slowly to pieces."

fire in an hour or so notice in it a resemblance to either Domingo or myself, and do not be alarmed. You have been a very brave woman all through the strain of this experience, Miss Duval. Please dry yourself out thoroughly and make yourself as comfortable as you can. We rescued your shawl and dried it out. You'll find it on your bed. Good-by, and may God grant you a long sleep! When I return to build up your fire I must be able to think of you as fast asleep and dreaming of your safe return to Iloilo by and by."

His last words had been almost tremulous with gentleness. Her firm, sweet face, looking up at him so trustfully in the light of the burning drift-wood, made it hard for him not to kneel at her feet and tell her all his heart. He turned abruptly away.

"Just a moment, Lieutenant," she called softly after him. "Your raincoat—you must take it now. I'm entirely dry, you know, and the fire will keep me quite cosy. And—and I know you must be suffering after all you've gone through. I should never forgive myself if all this exertion for me opens up your old wound again."

With her face full of anxiety for him she had deftly removed his coat and held it out pleadingly toward him.

"Miss Duval," he said sternly, "do you wish to rob me of a chance to do you a slight service? Why, all you have is that poor thin shawl, and you are shivering this moment."

In the end he prevailed, and went down the beach exultingly, leaving her to dry out the brown masses of her hair at the fire. Three-quarters of an hour later he came tiptoeing back, and stood guard outside her door, an alert sentry and a faithful fireman during her slumbers. Once her excited nerves refusing to allow her to sleep restfully, she had opened her eyes and seen him sitting quietly at the fire, his khaki uniform still wrinkled and damp, his hat gone, his black hair thrown carelessly back from his earnest eyes, his thoughtful young face staring at the embers, and his slender fingers resting lightly on his revolver butt. With a sudden leaping of warm gratitude within her, she had closed her eye-lids to slumber in happy safety well into the earlier hours of the forenoon.

She awakened cramped and stiff, but with her strength renewed. A half-dozen cocoanut gourds filled with fresh water were at the shelter's entrance, and a bamboo stick with a fragment of paper pinched into its split end aroused her curiosity. Reaching out cautiously for it she opened the note and read with amusement:

"Breakfast now ready in the dining-car ahead. Fish!"

The sea, bright in the sun, was still thundering a hundred feet away in majestic loneliness, not a sign of sail or distant

shore showing over its still troubled surface. A single gull wheeled and dived in the breakers, the only sign of life. But, glancing shyly up the beach, she saw that both Domingo and the Lieutenant were within hailing distance, the first busy over the wreck of the "prao," now left high up on the beach by the receding tide, and the second bending over his fire. Finishing her toilet with some pains, she went cheerfully to them.

"Fish!" she cried merrily, after greetings.

"It's no joke," laughed the officer, proudly exhibiting a cunningly built oven of stones in which reposed a neatly baked "cicerone." "Domingo is a genuine successor of Petrus the Fisherman. He had rigged up tackle and landed a mess of these right out of the surf before the sun had awakened your humble servant."

"I suppose you have all breakfasted then, long ago," she said ruefully.

"We couldn't wait."

Heart prevaricated cheerfully, not caring to inform her that the only fish caught had been reserved for her, and that he and his two companions had fed upon a strictly banana menu. He had prepared a rude wooden trencher for her, and, seating her upon a cocoanut log, he served her ceremoniously to the finest part of the hot "cicerone."

"No salt, and I'm sure you'll ignore the coffee," he suggested.

"I never drink it," she affirmed, smiling. "Isn't this fish good! And cooked just to a missionary's taste."

The fish certainly was appetizing, and both the Lieutenant and Domingo forgot their own unsatisfactory breakfast as they watched her appreciative feasting, and urged her on to the last scrap of it.

Between Heart's trips from the oven to her log she was briefly apprised of their situation. They had been thrown

upon a small island off the west coast of Panay, and, so far as their brief trips up and down the beach informed them, it was uninhabited. The Tagalog had gone on an exploring tour of the beach to the south, and would bring them a report by noon. Bananas and cocoanuts promised them exemption from starvation, and the two men were both confident of their ability to get back to Panay within thirty-six hours at most.

"From what remains of the wreck of the 'prao' we are constructing a smaller boat, and, when we have it fitted with a thatched sail and the wind shifts a few points, either Domingo or myself will beat our way over in it to Panay (it will not hold more than one), and bring over relief for the rest of us. From the rise back of us here we can make out the tips of the Antique Mountains, and can locate the very break in the range directly above San José de Buena Vista harbor, where the Navy keeps a gun-boat of the 'mosquito fleet.' They will come over for us as fast as steam can carry them."

His fair listener gave careful heed to his every word.

"Can't we possibly go together?" she asked.

"It would necessitate the construction of a large boat, and hold us here several days."

"Every moment is precious to me for brother's sake," she said slowly. "Yet it seems a great risk for a man to attempt to make the journey alone over that treacherous sea."

"Don't call the good old Jolo Sea hard names," he laughed. "It has given me the adventure of my career. If only we get you safely back to Iloilo in good health and courage, I shall be tempted to make an offering to Neptune. Now encourage Domingo as he patches up a float, and I will go out on a relief expedition for that Tagalog. It may be possible that there is a fishing village and suitable boats on the opposite side of the island. If you get lonesome, climb up the

hillock at your back and look over at the Antigue range. But keep in sight of Domingo."

"I should like to join the exploring party," she suggested daringly.

"Not this time, Lady Franklin," he returned in real regret. "I'm going to circuit the island, if possible."

She watched him as long as he was in sight, striding fearlessly along the sun-lit sands at the edge of the breakers. In spite of the dual ordeal of hospital and storm he was as erect as a young pine of the Cascades. Not until a curve of the shore hid him did she give heed to the faithful old Visayan chieftain as he busily worked over the wreckage of the "prao." With deft hands the old man was splicing and twisting bamboo ropes—the strongest in the world—and cutting away the ruined outriggers. She even found herself able to assist him a little, in spite of his vigorous expostulation.

As for the officer, his rapid stride carried him fatefully on to a gruesome sight. An hour's journey from the camp he rounded a projecting point well around on the southern shore of the little *isla*, and came abruptly upon the dead body of the Tagalog, his head split open by a bolo, and the signs of a furious struggle in the dry sand about the body. The man's brains were bulging from the riven skull, and a more sickening sight could hardly have been imagined. A single glance assured the startled soldier that no firearms had been used in the murder, and he repressed his first instinct, which had been to dodge beneath the bank, fearful of a volley from ambush. Flashing a keen glance at the palms nearest him, he again bent over the body of the victim. It was as he had thought; the man's pockets had been rifled, and even his "scapula" had been cut from his neck. The tracks of at least two men other than the Tagalog could be made out in the sand. He needed no other items.

"A ladrone island," he thought, with a quiver of appre-

hension. The Tagalog boatman had apparently been returning with the results of his scout when two natives had intercepted him from the dense growth along the shore—he could see their tracks leading out from the palms to the body and back again to the grove. The sand also informed him that the three had stood talking an instant before the foul act had been committed. The stolen “scapula” was infallible evidence that the mysterious two were not orthodox Visayans. Possibly they were Moros from Mindanao, more probably reckless ladrones who cared naught for the ban of Holy Church.

To get back to Grace was Heart’s instant resolve, and, revolver in hand, he ran in the very edge of the thundering surf back around the curving shore toward the camp. After an apparent eternity he came in sight of the two safely at work on the boat.

He slowed to a walk as he saw her glance up.

“Back so soon?” her sweet voice asked brightly. “Behold the primitive boat-builders at their labor.”

“Well done!” he praised fervently, noting with relief the progress of the work. The mass of wrecked bamboo now revealed a creditably patched hull of perhaps half the length of the original boat, with a miniature sail of thatch and an outrigger of the rudest construction. The cunning hands of old “Si Gugma” had worked a good two-thirds of a miracle.

“The voting members of the colony will now hold a caucus,” he said, jesting to hide his evil knowledge from her. “The women can continue at their work as usual on Election Day.”

She frowned in mock anger as he took Domingo aside and rapidly informed him of the tragedy.

The old man became much excited and urged in broken Spanish that they all attempt to escape together. He knew ladrones, he said, and knew them to be men with bowels of iron and hearts of rock. Even though without firearms,

they would not be long deterred from an attack by the Lieutenant's single revolver. Heart, however, insisted on the original plan. The death of the Tagalog, instead of frightening him, had acted upon him as danger always did, making him confident and at ease. No time was to be lost, he urged. Domingo must sail within a couple of hours at farthest. The boat could not possibly keep more than one afloat. The wind was veering into the west, and was becoming more and more favorable. By nightfall he should be off the coast of Panay, and every important coast town was garrisoned by the Forty-fourth Infantry, while the gunboat *Pronto* was lying at San José, with dare-devil Nick Adams in command of her. As to Miss Grace, he and his "Colt's 45" would be responsible for her. It was not at all probable that the ladrones had as yet even seen them.

The old man looked long and searchingly at the Lieutenant out of his gnarled old face as the officer talked, and at length gave a grudging assent. Although the quickest way out of their dangerous position, it was apparent that he dreaded the leaving of his beloved teacher and mistress under the threat of a lurking foe.

But Heart prevailed at last, and, after a feverish hour and a half of united work on the boat, he and Grace sat in the shade of a curving bank and watched Domingo's venturesome start for San José. He knelt in prayer with them on the beach before launching out, and, with a few old gourds filled with fresh cocoanut milk, and a bunch of bananas for food, he bobbed off over the now quieting sea, bravely waving his battered hat as long as he remained in sight.

XV

IN THE LAIR OF THE LADRONES



T MUST have been four in the afternoon—the Lieutenant's watch had been stopped by the sea water—when they confessed to each other that their friend was no longer visible.

"Now for a brief exploration," he said. "We will take the shore to the north this time."

"How peculiar that the owner of the 'prao' has not yet returned," she commented as she arose cheerfully to comply. "Doesn't that argue that he has found a village or a boat?"

"I fear not. He may simply have abandoned us, thinking that he could rig up a raft or float, and shift for himself. He was an utter stranger to me, of course, until I hired him yesterday noon at the docks."

Gathering up the water gourds, the rude fishing tackle left them by Domingo, and her shawl with the raincoat, Heart led the way northward up the beach, putting behind, farther and farther, the boatman's mutilated body. As he walked he took pains to keep between his companion and the heavy growth above the strip of sand. No sudden spring of a ladrone band would find him unprepared. So eager was he to make progress that he made it most difficult for her to keep up with him. An exclamation of cha-

grin at her own weariness brought him suddenly to a slower step and a remorseful apology.

"In a few minutes more we will have circled the north end, and should obtain a glimpse of the western beach," he added. "If there is any settlement on the island it should then be visible. I wish to warn you, however, that the discovery of inhabitants may but add to our difficulties. There is more than a possibility that we are in one of the outlaw nests of the Jolo Sea."

She turned a grave face toward him. With all her devotion to the Filipino people, she knew that the ferocity of some of the ladrone bands was akin to that of the American Indians.

A sudden break in the foliage ahead arrested his attention. Passing cautiously on, they soon came to the limit of the palms, which had lined the shore in an unbroken line all the way from camp. Peering through a screen of ferns, they saw not only an open field, partly overgrown but still plainly giving evidence of having been cleared by the hand of man, but in addition the stone walls of a considerable building rising in its center, and facing toward the open sea.

"Evidently an abandoned mission of the 'fraylies'," said Grace, expressing the thought of both of them.

"And if abandoned, an ideal resort for outlaws," supplemented the Lieutenant softly. "We can't afford to take risks, but I should heartily like to give you a good tile roof over your head to-night."

With the utmost caution the two came out on the clearing, taking advantage of what shrubbery and trees had encroached upon it. In a few moments they were standing silently below the grey old entrance to the "convento." Reassured by its ruined appearance, the Lieutenant, after an instant of hesitation, passed in under the arch, the doors creaking back upon their reluctant hinges. With his re-

volver at the ready, and followed by the brave girl at his back, he softly ascended the stone steps leading to the floor above. A second door, heavy and forbidding, barred his way at the head of the "escalada," but with the thought of providing a suitable shelter for Grace impelling him, he pushed boldly against it, felt it give, and sprang into the large upper room of the "convento." As he did so a swift glance showed it to be utterly devoid of living occupants, but most interesting nevertheless. Even Grace, entering behind him, gave a cry of mingled apprehension and admiration.

The entire upper floor of the building appeared to be simply a large and imposing hall. At its opposite end was a huge fire-place, above which hung a collection of rifles, boloes and sword-bayonets, arranged in a martial wall design. Between the windows on either side were similar groupings of war material. Several rusty carbines were leaning in a corner to the right of the hearth, while at the opposite end of the room were piled cases of ammunition and tinned commissary supplies. A huge mahogany-topped table and a set of carefully carved Spanish chairs divided the floor space with a dozen Filipino bed-frames, arranged against the side walls.

Shutting the heavy door through which they had entered, and sliding a huge bolt into place in its socket, the Lieutenant returned his revolver to its holster, drew a sigh of relief, and stepped over to the windows on the sea-front. As he had hoped, the western beach of the *isla* was visible from this point of vantage, and an innocent-looking little village nestled in a gleaming bend of the shore perhaps a mile away. He noticed with satisfaction the utter absence of boats. Not a single sail darkened the sea, and not a single hull was drawn up on the sand before the village. He stepped back from the window and made a sweeping bow to Grace, who was looking in wonder about her.

"At your disposition, señorita. This is your roof for the night."

"But surely there is great risk in remaining here," she exclaimed. "We seem to be in a nest of outlaws. I recognize some of their insignia."

"We are in most wonderful luck," he responded. "The ladrone village is a mile below us, and in plain view of yonder window. There isn't a break in the view of the beach, and not a single boat is drawn up on it. We have struck their headquarters while the rascals are off on Panay or elsewhere on a raid."

"But the village must surely be inhabited."

"Doubtless. The old men and the women and children probably live there throughout the year. I can't account for the unguarded condition of this rendezvous on any other hypothesis than that the fighters are practically all absent. They will hardly return before Nick comes with the *Pronto*, and you may promise yourself a dreamless sleep in 'the ogre's cave.' Now make yourself the mistress of everything you see, while I scout the premises below. First, however, I will take the liberty of opening out a box of tinned goods. I happen to know this brand. The rascally Englishman who runs that grocery on Calle Real in Iloilo has fortunately been holding communication with our enemies."

By the time night fell the Lieutenant had repaired the lower doors sufficiently to shut the huge arched entrance to any wanderer from the village, or even a returning ladrone. He then carried a heavy bed frame down stairs, and prepared himself a sleeping-place directly across the inside of the door. It blocked the only means of getting to the floor above. But before retiring for the night he had the pleasure of sipping a hot broth prepared by the young missionary over a fire on the hearth. He had not dared to build up a good fire, fearful that the villagers might notice its reflection from the "convento" windows. But she had done wonders

over it with a can of tomatoes and some hard-tack. Coffee, with condensed milk to lighten it, followed the broth, and he looked at her in re-inforced admiration.

Following the meal Heart at first vacillated from the hearth to the seaward windows, hoping that, in case of a return of the ladrone flotilla, or even of the two mysterious murderers of the Tagalog, he might be vouchsafed an adequate warning. Eventually, as the night without became intense with shadows, he settled himself in a chair near the one she had chosen at the glowing embers, and busied himself in examining sundry of the dilapidated pistols and carbines of the place, doctoring one or two carefully with a bottle of oil which he had discovered above the mantel-shelf. From time to time he furtively watched the beautiful face beside him as she sat looking pensively into the fire.

There was no pathetic droop to the lines of her mouth, and her eyes were steady and tearless, though sad. She had succeeded in carefully confining her hair again, and her simple dress seemed to him to be wonderfully restored by some occult means. But he knew the travail of her mind and the anxieties she felt, not so much for herself as for the distracted brother across the Jolo Sea.

It was an overwhelming feeling of tenderness for her which undid him. Impelled by it he said:

"You were wonderfully brave last night."

"The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea," she quoted simply.

"Yes, I knew it to be your faith in Christ's care which kept you so calm in that awful first breath of the simoon."

He paused, a tumult of thought arising.

Again she preferred another's words to her own.

"I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care,"

she repeated softly with such a light in her eyes that his whole soul was moved within him.

There was a long silence. Outside, the sea was pounding the beach in the growing light of the moon, and its cool breath stirred through the embrasures of the old building. Whatever was the mixture of impressions which hurried him on to his ruin he never could afterward remember. It might have been the rhythmic sound of the waves without, the stir of the night air through the dimly lighted room, the intoxication of a moonbeam playing an instant in his fair companion's hair, or her sweet, pensive face alone, which decided his susceptible mind. But after all it matters but little. The great step was taken, and its mistake was never to be rectified. He had suddenly seized her hand in his, and was kneeling at her chair pouring out a confession of his love.

There is a mighty eloquence in a pure heart of devotion, and possibly for an instant, as her dear hand trembled in his, and her startled eyes tried bravely to meet his upraised face, he had his battle nearly won. But the thought of the utter untimeliness of his suit blotted out the appeal of his glowing face, and hardened her in a flash.

Withdrawing her hand she arose, and stood silently in the now gloomy room. Compelled to follow suit he had also risen and awaited her reply, while everything became a dizzy red before his eyes.

Her voice, suddenly grown hard and bitter, struck him a savage stab.

"So *this* is what your sudden conversion means!"

Her little figure was drawn rigidly up, yet he was looking down upon her as she struck again.

"I wondered at the sudden change in a notoriously cruel and carousing Army officer, but I rebuked myself for suspecting you. Would to heaven I had been more worldly-wise. I had dreamed that your inspiration was a pure devo-

tion to the Master of men. It appears to have been a different motive which actuated you!"

Almost unable to credit himself with having heard aright, he had stood in silent intensity, his face as white as when they had carried him into the Brigade Hospital after Ignotan.

"A Christian! No, not even a gentleman, to speak to me here as you have while we were in this situation! How know I but that this whole wretched adventure is your planning? You flatter yourself that you are saving me from the ladrones. Sir, I prefer their company to yours! To wait until Domingo is gone, to rid yourself in some way of the boatman, to place me here where I am utterly dependent upon you, and then with all this leverage press your pretended sentiment upon me! I should have known that no intimate of Lieutenant Turenne's could be so weak as to consider a mere woman's helplessness."

He stood back against the mantel. His head had fallen, and his soul had turned to stone.

In womanish changeableness she cried out at him:

"Why don't you speak, sir? When will you unbar that door and escort me to the village?"

He raised his eyes and looked at her quietly. For a moment he could not speak. His throat was parched. The words came at last in the voice of another man:

"I have already spoken, Miss Duval. I have told you that I love you with all the strength of my heart. You are right about the untimeliness of the confession, however. But I beseech you to remain here until relief arrives. The Tagalog I found butchered on the south beach this morning."

"It is hard to believe you," she said hopelessly. "I prefer to go—"

"You cannot trust me?" he said dully. "Then let me put this on another ground. You do not credit me with being sincerely a Christian man, nor even a gentleman. But you

are an Army girl. You know there is an honor of the Service. It is as a soldier, then, and not either as a friend or a Christian brother that I ask the privilege of guarding you until help arrives."

For a moment she hesitated. The fire-light played an instant across his white face and reflected from the gold emblem on his collar.

"You have broken my heart, sir, with disappointment concerning you. But so be it; I will remain. I can trust—the Army."

She watched him, her mind in a chaos of mingled emotions, as he left the mantel and stepped to the corner of the room. Selecting a revolver from the heap he had been assorting, he laid it on the edge of the table nearest her. Then, saluting gravely but with eyes downcast, he turned and strode to the upper door, examined his own revolver an instant and mechanically felt around the row of cartridges in his belt. Then, drawing back the bolt, he swung open the door and prepared to descend to his bed below in the ruined vestibule.

"There is a bolt on your side of this door," he said quietly, and disappeared from her sight.

XVI

THE GENERAL TURNS CZAR FOR THE SAKE OF THE SERVICE



OWN in the ruined vestibule, seated upon his couch, with his back against the doors, and his arms tightly folded, Heart fought and won the greatest battle of his Army career. It was as though all the devils of hell leered through the darkness into his white, set face, and mockingly iterated and re-iterated, "So this is what your pretended conversion means!" And by the force of an iron will he marshaled a hundred times his whirling, racking mental powers, and hurled them in a stern negation at his adversaries. But it was no easy task. The temptation was almost irresistible to curse, to renounce his religious vows, to allow his rejection by the woman above to harden him into a betrayal of his Christ. He clutched his fingers deep into his khaki jacket, clenched his teeth, and straightened every muscle in his body, while the damp sweat oozed out upon his face.

It was far past midnight when victory came to him, and he knew himself unalterably true to the New Life. Chilled, weary in mind, and suddenly conscious of an utter exhaustion of body, he shifted his revolver holster to the front and stretched limply out upon the bed.

But as he endeavored to lose himself in sleep, he became aware of a peculiar throbbing in the left breast. Raising

himself to a sitting position he hastily unbuttoned his blouse and flannel shirt, and, thrusting in his hand, felt, as he had feared, the warm blood of his re-opened wound.

It was as he sat for an instant startled and wondering how he should succeed in bandaging himself without assistance, that the heavy doors suddenly vibrated with the force of a resounding blow.

A born soldier, Heart was master of himself and the situation in an instant.

"Open! Open!" shouted an impatient voice in Spanish.

"Who comes?" he challenged in the same tongue. "Answer, or your life is forfeited!"

There was a sound of shuffling feet without, then a second of silence, and then a voice harsh and wrathful.

"Son of a dog! Who dares to challenge Juarez? Unbar, or you will be slit into fish bait!"

"Easy, easy, Captain. I am a 'Christiano,' and do not love blood-shed. But you must wait till morning for entrance here. Let us be wise and council by sunlight."

A shrill laugh of derision came through the door, and a dozen oaths from as many throats. Heart stepped aside to the shelter of a stone buttress, expecting that the firing would begin. But a second silence ensued without, and a new voice in quiet and even tones addressed him.

"Señor, you are a brave man. But you are one against many. While we were away to-day you were carefully watched by our women and old men. You and the 'Americana' are known to be alone. We are soldiers of honor. Trust to our generosity rather than arouse our passions by resistance."

"Being soldiers, you will understand that I cannot open to you without orders from my superior," responded Heart coolly. "Withdraw from the door, or we shall be compelled to open fire on you."

The answer to this challenge was a quick succession of

stunning reports. The band outside had placed their rifles against the rudely barricaded door and hastily discharged them. Almost simultaneously came the crash of their united weight against the barrier, and for an instant it looked as though the wooden beam in the half-decayed sockets would splinter before them. But, with his head still ringing with the concussion of their guns, the Lieutenant had poked his revolver through the yawning crack between the giving doors, and with a twist of his wrist emptied its five chambers at as many different angles.

With a medley of staccato curses the attacking party sprang away from the deadly muzzle, and allowed the doors to groan back into position. An instant later, and they began a desultory fire on the entrance, but from the sound of their rifles the Lieutenant knew them to be at some distance from the "convento."

Breaking open his cylinder, he rapidly reloaded it, and smiled grimly as their bullets splintered through the woodwork and flattened against the back wall of the vestibule. The imminent danger of a spinning fragment of lead ending his life did not even occur to him. Nor did he remember the now steadily flowing wound in his breast. To hold the entrance till Nick Adams came with his gunboat was the uppermost thought, and the only one that his tired brain seemed capable of producing.

Ten minutes of firing "at will," and the door was hardly more than a sieve. Though surrounded by intense darkness, the officer could catch glimpses of the moonlight outside sifting through the now splintered panels of the barrier. Applying his eye to one of these jagged holes during a suspicious lull in the firing, he made out a body of men not twenty paces away stealthily advancing with a palm-log to batter down his defense. As he prepared to fire on the leaders, the door at the top of the stairs at his back suddenly opened, and, turning at the noise, he saw the figure of Grace lean-

ing toward him, and apparently endeavoring to pierce with her eyes the cloud of powder smoke billowing up the stairs from the vestibule. One hand was resting on the door she had just opened, the other held a revolver.

The upper room of the "Convento" seemed flooded with a brilliant light behind her.

She shouted down to him, but he did not hear her. His head was dizzy.

"Put out that light!" he cried. "You will draw their fire."

As he spoke the battering-ram came smashing into the doors with a deafening shock, and the nature of the light above came to him like an elixir of life.

"It's the searchlight from the gunboat," he called up hoarsely. "Signal with your revolver from the windows!"

But she called again. This time he understood.

"Come up here, Lieutenant. Quickly! This door is stronger."

"Obey!" he returned almost angrily. "Signal at once," and wheeling from her, he turned his speaking revolver on the now savagely attacking enemy. The light behind him suddenly went out, and the vestibule became a reverberating hell of smoky blackness, shot through with incessant red flashes, as the ladrones, thrusting their muzzles through the parting timbers, searched every corner of the place with their fire, and frantically attempted to tear away the still stubborn bar which propped the staggering doors. For an instant he stood defiant, then suddenly sank into a clumsy heap upon the floor. One shoulder-strap had been clipped from his blouse, a second bullet had smashed his left hand, a spent piece of lead had plowed across his face, and blood from the veins in his forehead filled his eyes. Four times he had succeeded in emptying his revolver before the door gave way, and as the band of Visayans stumbled in over the wreckage he automatically emptied it for the fifth time, and slapped the useless piece of steel hard across the face

of the first man who bent over him, bolo in hand. Every man a demon, they fought each other for a chance to club or stab the huddled body in the corner, and not until each man had struck him was their wrath appeased.

"Now up the stairs!" directed a voice, and a surge was made up the lower steps. The foremost Visayan stumbled and there was an instant of choking confusion. In the midst of it a voice shouted out above the curses,

"Soldados! Soldados! Americanos!"

A bugle was sounding outside the "convento," a cheer arose above the boom of the surf, and a brilliant swath of light flashed athwart the entrance.

For a second the breathless men in the crowded vestibule jostled each other in indecision. Then with a leap one of the band darted out over the ruined barricade and disappeared. Like sheep the rest followed, frantic with a great fear and running like rabbits before the searching carbines of the approaching avengers, and leaving four dead comrades behind them.

The vestibule was hardly emptied before it was filled again to overflowing by deep-breathing, hatless, bare-throated Jackies from the *Laguna de Bay*, who stood gravely watching while their young commander and a beautiful, sobbing girl lifted a blood-soaked figure from the stone-flagging, and attempted to force a stimulant between its lips by the light of a hospital lantern.

"Curses on the cowards!" groaned Adams. "They've cut him to shreds. Miss Duval, let one of the men do that. You need attention yourself. Just step aside, and we'll put him on a stretcher. We have a surgeon aboard."

She silently obeyed. The sight of the battered face of the man who had defended her had stricken her with speechless anguish. The men deftly lifted the limp body to an improvised blanket-stretcher and started for the beach. Following closely, she became aware of the presence of old Do-

mingo. He was holding a second lantern, and his face worked convulsively as he raised his eyes to hers.

"Now thanks be unto God that you are safe!" he said in Visayan.

"And thanks to his servant, 'Si Gugma,'" she said softly, looking at the heroic old disciple with a glow in her tear-stained eyes. "But, O my brother in Christ—if *he* should not live—if *he* should not live!"

The humble colporter shook his head sadly, and trudged at her side behind the bearers, down to the thunder of the surf.

They could make out the gunboat riding a quarter-mile beyond the breakers, the spreading fan of its searchlight bearing directly upon them. A ship's boat was waiting to take the landing party back, and the wounded officer was carefully carried out in the boiling water and deposited skilfully in it.

Adams stood at her side as Grace eagerly watched the difficult feat.

"I deeply regret detaining you on the beach an instant longer than necessary," he apologized. "But I've ordered the men to row Lieutenant Heart immediately to the ship. He is bleeding badly, and needs quick attention, if he is to be given a chance for his life. They will come back for the rest of us shortly."

She was watching the bobbing lantern in the stern of the tossing tender as the sailors pulled steadily away toward the gunboat in the glow of the searchlight, and her voice was strained and unnatural. "May God restore him to us," was all her contracting throat would allow her to say.

Twenty minutes later she was in the captain's own quarters on the little war vessel.

"These are your quarters until we get to Iloilo," said Adams, flushing with delight at the privilege of turning his cabin over to her, and staying out on deck all night himself.

"My 'muchacho' will attend you whenever you ring."

As she thanked him warmly she felt the vibration of the engines as they started full speed for Panay, and when he left her she felt so utterly weary that she entered at once into the inviting whiteness of the masculine boudoir opening off the little cabin. Glancing out of the port-hole before retiring at the swirl of waters rushing past, she was startled to see a mass of flame rising apparently out of the sea a mile or two astern. Looking steadily at it, she at last divined its meaning. The Jackies had fired the old "convento" before leaving the beach, and a great flapping flag of flame was waving her a fitting adieu from the rim of the outlaw island.

* * * * *

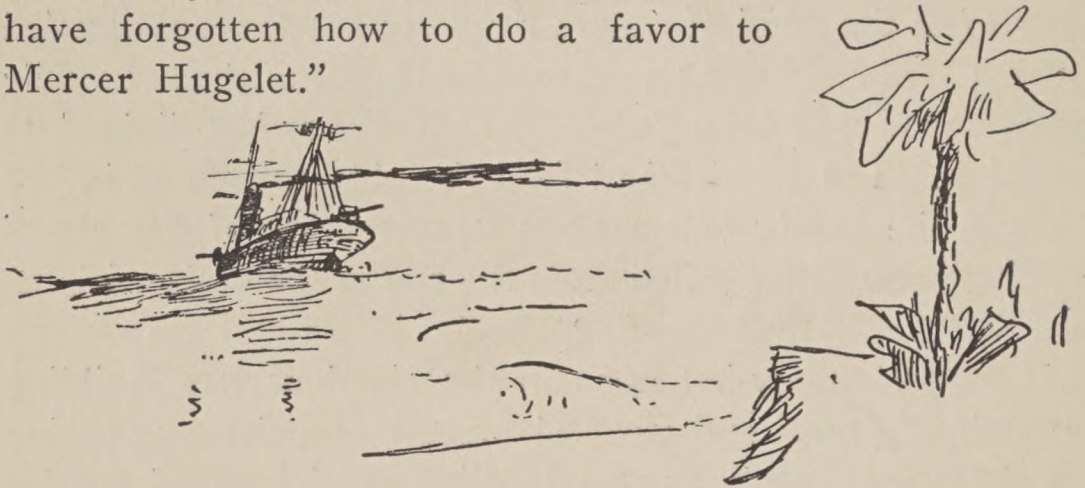
It was a steamy-hot noon in the Headquarters Building on Iloilo "plaza," and General Mercer Hugelot was eyeing his Adjutant sternly as that bustling official sorted out his papers preparatory to leaving for his light mid-day lunch and his three-hour "siesta."

"Yes, sir, I want that note sent to General MacArthur at Manila," he was saying in his most stubborn voice. "I consider Lieutenant Heart one of the rising men of the Service and (by the Eternal!) I intend to save him from himself."

The Adjutant shrugged his shoulders eloquently. The General evidently read a protest in the action, for he scowled ominously.

"When you have been in the Army as long as I have, Captain," he said sharply, "you will understand that it is sometimes necessary to borrow ideas from Russia. I still have a little influence at Manila, and I intend to have Heart put where he'll come back to his senses and stop rioting around as an escort to tender young Baptist missionaries. I've nothing to say against the girl, sir. She's a plucky young Army product herself, I hear. But I'm going to see that Lieutenant Herbert Heart is promoted to a command remote enough and busy enough to win him back to his

military conscience. And I'm not going to wait until she has him salted down before I act. He goes to Manila for treatment at the Second Reserve on the *Solace* day after to-morrow, and if he gets back to love affairs and superlative romantics in the Department of the Visayas, it will be because my old friends in the War Office have forgotten how to do a favor to Mercer Hugelet."



XVII

HARD THINKING IN ABRA CANYON



CRACK company of Regulars sprawled out in their noon-day "siesta" on the plateau summit of square old Mount Taal. A half-mile below them the green serpent of the Rio Abra crawled flashing among gigantic boulders forever toward the sea.

At every point of the compass appeared an irregular chorus of hills, with their sharp monarch, Bulagao, rising haughtily above them to the northward. The subdued roar of the river united with the cool winds from the China Sea to give the men a blessed sleep after their hard "hike," and only two of the entire detachment were awake. A sentry stood statue-like far out on an almost overhanging butte, steadily watching the course of the river toward Vigan, and the newly appointed captain of the company sat on the brink of the main precipice, his feet swinging out into space, his face bent unseeing on the sunny face of the hills opposite.

Three long months in the Second Reserve Hospital at Manila had been a repetition in many respects of his experience in the Brigade Hospital at Iloilo. But with one very important exception—the pain, the heart-searching, the helplessness, had not been relieved by any half-ashamed but darling hope. Without the aid of this secret medicine the doctors had found it hard to bring him back to reasonable

health. But he had painfully turned the goal at last, and had reported for duty while still cautiously dragging himself about.

It seemed murder to put him on the active list so soon, as the Adjutant at Manila admitted, but there was a fearful shortage of officers in the fighting Sixtieth Infantry, just then engaged in stamping out a hot guerilla warfare amongst the gorges of Abra province in Northern Luzon. So, much to his surprise and chagrin, Heart found himself transferred from the dear old Fifty-fifth, promoted to a captaincy in the Sixtieth, and ordered to assume command of Company D at San Quentin, the loneliest post on the Abra. For a month now he had "hiked" over the hot stones of the "arroyos," chasing elusive, stinging enemies, and by dint of hard work and careful, petty diplomacy had succeeded in "pacifying" his territory, and had relieved the provision flotillas passing on the river between Vigan and Banguet from the annoyance of insurgent sharpshooters. It had been wasting work, but he had more than held his own, for the night wind was colder than he had experienced elsewhere in the Islands, and howled a message of health to him every night up the hills.

But the marks of his awful night at the "convento" gate could never entirely leave him. He would never again be able to hold a palette, for his left hand was twisted and palsied. A dull red scar, too, seared his face from eyebrow to ear. A second bolo-cut, deep in the right shoulder, had so drawn in healing that his old, commanding erectness was impossible, and he carried a bullet somewhere in the muscles of the left thigh. But the dangerous wound received at Ignotan was seemingly cured, and, apart from a general emaciation, he felt himself to be a well man.

"Convoy in sight, sir."

The sentinel on the butte was pointing down at the river. A line of oblong yellow patches showed upon the jade

green of its surface, and little brown figures clustered on each one. Lieutenant Davis was bringing up his precious ammunition and hard-tack through the threatening gorge to supply the belts and stomachs of the fighting regiments around Banguet, and his rafts were manned by muscular Ilocanos, poling against the glancing current.

Heart's keen eye soon made out the Lieutenant's particular craft, and as it came under his lofty perch he made out Davis himself, waving his hat to him in salute. He responded in kind, and, gathering up his command, followed along on the summit of the mountain, and then, in order to keep the rafts in sight, marched them down the winding trails to the edge of the Abra. He appeared on its bank opposite San Quentin just as the last raft went laboriously by. A couple of rude Tinguane canoes were awaiting him, and, his task for the day completed, he supervised the ferrying of his men over to the post, and, crossing himself with the last squad, wended his way slowly to his tumble-down headquarters' building.

By three o'clock he had conquered the details of his post for the day, and had settled himself out on the balcony which overhung the roaring river—a New Testament on the table at his elbow. From his position there was no sign of life other than an occasional skimming bird, the other buildings of the desolate little "barrio" being behind him in a fold of the huge hills. He was practically alone amid the mysteries of the sounding cañon. He sat quietly, his hands motionless upon the arms of his wicker chair, until the shadow of the mountain behind him crawled like a reminding index finger far up the face of the sun-lit hill opposite, and the company bugler sang the mess-call faintly above the roar of the waters.

His old servant, Hong Kong, soon appeared with a simple meal, and after eating lightly of it he once more settled himself to a deep reverie, until the stars looked over the rim of

the hills at him, the cool night wind moaned steadily past him, and the velvet shadows blotted out the stern lines of the grave young face. The young officer was listening, half-willingly, half-unwillingly, to a voice such as Elijah once heard in that other cleft in the rock in far-away Sinai, in a century long past, and so enrapt was he that even "Taps" sounded its lament unheeded by him.

But somewhere near eleven o'clock he started suddenly to the rail of the balcony and leaned over, peering into the darkness. He had heard a sharp challenge from one of his sentries on the bank below. He listened intently, and was not disappointed. Up through the wind and the river's complaint came a second challenge:

"Advance, friend, and be recognized."

Apparently some one had come down the river and had landed at the post. Almost immediately came the tread of an orderly and the message,

"Colonel Richards of the Engineers is below, sir."

With an exclamation of genuine pleasure, Heart sprang down the crazy staircase, and came back with his face happier by far than it had shown for months, escorting a burly but martial-looking old gentleman, who came through the doorway and into the "sala" with his hand affectionately laid upon his young host's shoulder.

The new-comer was not entirely unexpected. He had passed on his way to Banguet a few days before, and had telegraphed down that he might stop at San Quentin in returning to Vigan. He had come up to look at the cañon, with a view to putting a wagon road through paralleling the river, and thus obviating the necessity of rafting supplies. But he had known Heart's father in the old days of the Army of the Potomac, and wished to meet the gallant son, whom he had not seen for years.

Suddenly grown cheerful, Heart escorted him to his most comfortable corner, and celebrated by ordering Hong Kong,

in spite of the Colonel's protest, to prepare a cup of something hot. He then lit every candle remaining to him, and sat down with his guest.

The Colonel was a man whose profile might have been stamped upon the buttons and medals of the Service as an embodiment of soldierliness. His features were regular and strong, his head impressive in shape, and well set upon broad shoulders. His gray mustache hung above a chin of adamant, and deep-set eyes, eagle-like in intensity, looked out from below heavy brows. His flowing white hair and old-fashioned imperial were reminiscent of those dashing days of which Heart had often heard, those days when Colonel Richards of the Engineers had been a dare-devil Captain in Custer's Brigade of Michigan Cavalry.

"Hong Kong will have you a little something shortly, Colonel," he said. "We are all living out of cans up here, of course."

"Don't worry, Herbert," said the senior familiarly, thinking of the strong resemblance to his old comrade in the young face before him, but noting, too, the haggard lines in it. "Don't worry about the Commissary Department. Three wars have taught me little military science, but they have cured my stomach of all squeamishness. By the by, are you quite recovered from your affair in the Jolo Sea? You know I've been hearing quite a lot of your escapades through the *Manila Times*, and also from my old friend, General Mercer Hugelet."

"Why, thank you, Colonel, I feel that I'm improving every day."

"I fear you have been hurried back into active service too soon. You look a little drawn. This God-forsaken post isn't depressing you, is it?"

The Colonel was searching the young officer's face carefully as he asked the question.

"I enjoy the cañon. It seems to have been something of

a tonic to me," responded Heart, trying to evade the steady inventory of his guest's kindly but piercing look.

"I'm glad to know it—*glad* to know it. I'm to leave for the States in a few days, and I want to take a good report to that dear mother of yours. I want to be able to tell her that her boy is not only a hero, but a sensible soldier, taking the best care of himself because he is too chivalrous to cause his mother grief, and too patriotic to rob his country prematurely of his services."

Heart flushed. The kindly tones of the comrade of his own father's youth suddenly warmed him into a resolution to unburden his mind, and ask the counsel of this man whom both his father and his mother had been proud to call their friend. Hesitatingly he said:

"Colonel Richards, I wish to unburden myself to you in a little confession. But I am afraid that if you allow me to do it, it will both startle and pain you."

"Now that's just what I want you to do, my boy," was the ambiguous but hearty response, and so, reserving nothing of the great mental struggle of the past three or four months, Heart told his story and asked for counsel.

As he finished Hong Kong was quietly arranging the Colonel's late supper, and, sipping the hot coffee absently, the veteran sat in deep thoughtfulness before answering. At last he turned his fine old face fully upon the younger man and said:

"Herbert, before I counsel you in this important matter I want you to state your problem to me again. Do it slowly, so that I can get the issue more clearly before me."

In careful obedience, Heart began again more deliberately.

"As you yourself doubtless knew, sir, my father was an actively Christian man, and my mother is an ideal of what Christian womanhood may be to the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that I should follow in their steps and

confess Christ. Strange to relate, however, I was practically an unbeliever, a materialist, when the Iloilo missionaries first met me, and it was mainly through their counsel and patience that I saw my difficulties vanish, and decided to take upon me the obligation of the Christian life. This I openly did several months ago, and naturally I have been something of a student of the New Testament ever since. Especially has this been the case during my sickness at Manila, and my leisure hours at this post. In my study I have seemed to find a call conflicting with my already chosen life-work. It seems almost unmistakable at times that it is God's will for me to leave the Army and become a missionary. This is a bold way to state it, but it brings the issue out fairly. ✓

"Now, as to the bias of my own will, you must know what that is, for you know that the soldier in me began at my very birth. When I was but a little lad of nine I had already become a General. I had succeeded in painfully cutting out several hundred paper soldiers, and, mapping out with chalk the bare floors of the old attic, I organized them, arrayed them and manœuvered them in mimic warfare. A little later I kept a careful enrolment of my regiments and their battles, reporting laboriously each engagement and the disposition of all my forces—infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Before I was big enough to hold the huge volumes steadily, I was feverishly feasting on Abbott's *Life of Napoleon* and kindred books, and at twelve years of age I could have mapped the military career of the great Corsican from Brienne to Waterloo. Every book dealing with our own wars, '76, 1812, and the four years of fighting in the Sixties, was food for me. At fourteen I was allowed to have an occasional handling of a gun. I caressed lock, stock and barrel with an almost sacred devotion. Merely to touch a rusty old musket or a dusty sabre hanging on the walls of our

old home was sufficient to send a thrill of ecstasy through me.

"Out of this early and constant passion came my art. I dreamed soldiers until I had to draw them, and I drew them everywhere, in my geography text-book, on my slate, across my arithmetic tablet, and even, shyly, on the blackboard, encouraged by my teachers.

"As a youth I delved into every military record I could discover. Nothing interested me more than the dry reports of the War Department which my father had stored away on his shelves. I perused intently the lives of Hannibal, Belisarius, Cæsar, Charles Martel, Von Moltke, or whoever else was on record as having struck a martial blow or planned a martial movement. Even now, with all my familiarity with Army life, my nerves tingle at the bugle calls and the sight of marching men. I think, too, that I loved my country, that land so pre-eminently blest of God, with something approaching a veritable worship. And with such a passion for arms, wedded to a loyal affection for my country and her institutions, I have hitherto felt myself firmly fitted in God's place for me in this world. Surely, amid the armed forces of the world's best Government, there is room for a Christian man to carve out for himself a career of far-reaching and dignified influence. When I think of that glorious Christian, 'Chinese' Gordon, or our own Robert E. Lee, I feel justified in the belief that I need not lay aside the Service I love in order to be true to my God.

"Then, as I have said, there is the Artist within me, too. Born perhaps of my martial ambitions, it has persisted until it has become a large part of me. I shall never forget the thrill I experienced the first time I entered a studio of my own. It was a bare and dirty room, but my imagination pictured it full of masterpieces, and I could not but feel that I had a universe of opportunity before me as I took up my brush and began my first ambitious picture. I still feel that

the Artist is own brother to the Poet in the inspiring of our laggard race. It is the method of the one to use ink, while the other uses paint. And such names as Michel Angelo and Raphael convince me that the Christian alone will some day stand the acknowledged prince of the modern artistic world, for the Christian alone possesses the supreme themes and the sufficient inspiration. Yes, I cannot but contend that there is room for me to serve my Redeemer in the realm of either Art or Arms.

"But the disquieting of my soul 'will not down,' and thus I come to ask your counsel. I cannot read the word of God without something akin to a fear arising within me—a fear that it may be that in neither garrison nor studio shall I serve out my life, but rather as a missionary to these Filipinos whom we came here to fight. Such a role would have appeared ludicrous and impossible to me a few months ago, and even now I cannot think of a single department of life for which I am not better qualified.

"This, then, Colonel Richards, is my problem. As a friend of my father and my mother, and as a lover of the Service and the Fine Arts, I ask your opinion as to my duty as you see it."

As Heart finished his statement and anxiously waited, the Colonel, forgetting his supper and all else but the young man's appeal, rose from the table and moved closer to a group of candles sputtering on a ledge. Thrusting his hand into his blouse he pulled out a little soiled book in flexible binding. Opening it with care, he revealed a loose sheet of folded paper between its pages.

"Come here, nearer this light, Herbert," he said gravely.

The young man arose and approached him.

"This book, my lad, is my dearest treasure. It is a New Testament. This loose sheet is my 'prayer-list,' as I term it. You have appealed to me as a lover of the Service and a lover of the beautiful and true in Art. Listen, Herbert;

I am also a disciple of Jesus Christ. When I was a college student I fought a battle so similar to yours that it startles me to think of it. With me it was a question of the ministry or the Army. I took the proffered commission, and I have found the service of my country glorious. But all down the years I have seemed to hear a voice, saying, 'My child, you could have served your flag and country better if you had built up its manhood by the proclaiming of the gospel.' It is easier to fight for one's country than it is to invest one's life in a quiet way to make that country worth fighting for. The Army has been a rough school, but, as you put it, there is room in its ranks and in its councils for that all-too-rare type of soldier, such as Philip Sidney, Stonewall Jackson, and 'Chinese' Gordon. I have ever had such ideals before me, and I have made partial peace with my conscience by being fairly faithful to them. On my mind I carry the problems of my department of the Service, but on my heart for years I have carried a more important burden—the names, the burdens, the spiritual needs of many of the individual men of my command. Ridley, who came down on the raft with me to-night, I led to Christ during the Porto Rico campaign."

Pausing a moment, the Colonel reached out his hand and placed it upon Heart's shoulder, looking earnestly into the young man's attentive, thoughtful face.

"Herbert, you have, I believe, a great future in the Army. I have read that book of yours on *The American Army Necessarily Democratic*. In it you touched our greatest problem and illuminated it. You have shown that you can not only fight, but deal skillfully with the fundamental need of our Service, a thorough revising of our present system, which apes the monarchical armies of Europe and encourages the constant friction of officer and enlisted man, and practically forbids, in time of peace, the enlistment of suitable material. I should like to see you stay in the Army,

and eventually teach some of us older heads how to reorganize on a thoroughly military basis, and still avoid the aristocratic, autocratic red-tapism of our present methods. It would be a great service to your country, and it would bring the Regulars into the affection of the people—a thing as yet seemingly impossible. The whole country admires the Regulars, but the Volunteer is loved.

“But listen. There is a mightier work than either the Army or the Art-world can offer you. To help a feeble race upward into the mighty spiritual principles of Christian living, and to introduce that people to the civil and political privileges growing naturally out of the gospel of the Redeemer—that is in my mind a transcendent task. And, provided the burden of this Malayan people is honestly upon you, and you verily believe in the might and blessing of the gospel, I solemnly advise you, as we stand here to-night, to heed the evident voice of your God, *and accept the promotion he offers you!*”

The Colonel stopped again, his eyes glowing. Heart stood answering the older man's glance by a face frankly registering the battle stirring within him.

“But I don't know as you understand all that your advice means, sir,” he said brokenly. “This matter has impressed me as one of great and immediate urgency. If I do as you advise, how can I resign in the face of the enemy?”

“Haven't you heard the good news, lad? It came through to Banguet on the wire yesterday. Funston captured Aguinardo at Palinog last week. That means that the war is formally over.”

“But there will still be bush-whacking, the hardest kind of service, and here I am, the only officer with Company D. How can I ask to be relieved under the circumstances?”

“The hand of God is in this matter, Herbert. I am able to inform you that within a week a vacancy occurs on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief in Manila, and you have

been selected for the place. It is, of course, a 'soft-snap', and there will be no disgrace in refusing such an assignment. Your way is clear to become a statesman for the Kingdom of God. As I conceive it, you will find in the ministry of Christ room for every whit of your faculties, room for your imaginative and artistic instincts, room for every wise word you can utter or write, and a call for every ounce of your soldierliness. In advising you to go into this I simply urge you to place yourself where your powers will be utilized in an all-round manner in behalf of a superstitious, priest-ridden, tuba-drinking, cock-fighting, image-worshiping lot of promising raw material. It's a glorious 'forlorn hope' for God, my boy, with the world, the flesh and the devil against you!"

The Colonel's hand still rested on the young man's shoulder. His voice had lost every quaver of age, and rang clear with conviction. Heart felt his blood quicken. But for an instant more he vacillated. It was hard to allow the glorious allurements of the past to dissolve, even though, under the influence of the Colonel's words, the beauty and wonder of a new vision of duty was breaking in upon him.

But once more the Colonel spoke, and his words won a missionary for the firing-line of the Kingdom of God.

"Herbert, you are a soldier. You know how to take orders. There is a ranking Officer in the universe. His name is Jesus of Nazareth. There is a ranking Commission in the old Book, signed in his blood. Hear me while I read it to you, and let your soul march with its words. Here it is: 'All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the Age!'"

XVIII

A RESIGNATION FROM THE STAFF



HEART sat in civilian dress in the café of an obscure hotel in the Walled City, just off the main thoroughfare, Calle Real. He was sipping his morning coffee and glancing over the Manila papers before opening up a batch of recently arrived mail. He was telling himself that it was now past time for the story of his resignation to appear in print in the news-hungry dailies of the city, and he was not surprised to find the expected criticism at last.

As he opened the Manila *Liberty* he found a glaring head line sandwiched in between two prominent brewery advertisements. Its message was, "He Must Be Addled." Beneath the head line was a full column of close print, containing, among other paragraphs, the following:

The well known young soldier-author, Captain Herbert Heart, has resigned his commission in order to become a professional "Gospel-sharp." This action was taken by him some two weeks ago, but only to-day was his resignation accepted and the facts made public. As is well known in Manila, Heart has made a brilliant record both in Cuba and these islands. His appointment, a month ago, as a member of the Divisional Staff, was well received by his brother officers. He was looked

upon as having earned the assignment. His bravery at Santiago was conspicuous, and his capture of old General Concepcion in Panay is still fresh in the minds of the readers of *Liberty*. He was in the Abra country but a few weeks, but is said to have done good work in keeping the river open for the rafting of supplies to the Fifth and Thirty-sixth Regiments. Our Iloilo correspondent telegraphs that his infatuation for a beautiful young missionary is at the bottom of the affair. Heart's former comrades in the Fifty-fifth on Panay are said to be greatly shocked at his action.

Heart winced as he read the concluding lines, but he bravely finished, and attacked the account in *The Times*, with a set jaw. This was started with a heavy-face line, "Calls Him A Coward!" and read in part:

The strange action of Captain Heart in resigning from the Service has caused no end of comment since it leaked out last night. Major Sears, of the Twenty-third Cavalry, openly denounced Heart in the "sala" of the Officers' Club last night during a recess in the dancing program. Before a large and approving group of officers he said:

"No man who resigns in time of actual campaigning is worthy of the respect of true men. I have it from a friend of mine, an officer of Heart's old regiment in Panay, that he spent most of his time down there hanging around a young woman missionary at Iloilo, and that he was shipped up here to Manila to keep him from jumping the Service. If necessary, I will reveal the name of my informant. He is a well known and gallant soldier. Heart's action, to my mind, is a disgrace to the Service. It shows us that a man may make a mighty creditable showing for years, and yet prove to be a man of straw. I am surprised that the War Office allowed him to shirk his duties by resigning. This blow to the honor of the profession is due to the careless way in which immature young men are allowed to displace older and safer men. Heart came into the Army from a paint shop, I understand. What could you expect he would know about the honor of the Service?"

As the Major ceased there was a general murmur of assent from his auditors, several of whom were of high rank. Those

who did not condemn Heart's action as cowardly characterized it as weak minded. There was some talk of expelling him from the club, but it was pointed out that he had never applied for membership or even attended its popular social functions.

Heart's face was decidedly grim as he searched for the account in *The American Orient*. He did not have to search for it. It stared at him from the front page, and began with a concise, "Prefers His Girl to His Uncle Sam." As he read what followed a wave of blinding wrath swept over him, and he instinctively felt for the revolver he was never to wear at his side again. Among other things, better omitted here, appeared a paragraph, which unblushingly declared:



WHITNEY.

Heart is one of those men who can put on religion to get a girl to marry him. It is very significant that the Captain's new religious fervor is not of the Catholic celibate order. *The American Orient* knows of a certainty that this young officer, who has been touted as a marvel ever since he stumbled into Concepcion and allowed that coward to surrender to him, was an irreligious fire-eater until the beautiful Miss Duval, of the Baptist Mission at Jaro, met him. He immediately became a religious devotee (and also a devotee of Miss Duval's). Our special correspondent, Montaville Whitney, who has been spending several months in the Visayas as the guest of dashing Lieutenant Turenne and his famous scouts, sends us two items of interest by wire. The first is that, after a careful investigation, he finds that, had it not been for the bravery of modest Turenne in the skirmish at Ignotan, Concepcion would have escaped to the hills. Heart he believes to be a much-overrated man. His second item is of even greater interest. He says that there is a persistent rumor in Iloilo that Miss Duval eloped with Heart in a "prao" some months ago, hoping to reach Borneo and thus escape Uncle Sam's penalties for deserting

officers. But, as our readers already know, they were wrecked on an island off Antigue Province, and a skirmish with ladrones in which Heart acquitted himself decently, allowed them both to come out of the affair with undeserved credit. It is morally certain that the readers of *The American Orient* will soon read in these columns of the marriage of ex-Captain Herbert Heart and Miss Grace Duval. Apparently Heart had to go the whole way this time to get her, for he admitted to our reporter, who interviewed him at his quarters, that he contemplated taking up missionary work among the Filipinos. He was unwilling to reveal his exact place of activity. Well, God help the Baptist missionaries and their Filipino perverts!

For a full minute after reading the third article Heart sat grinding his teeth with a frightful passion surging within him. Then, in the midst of a resolve to call the editor of *The American Orient* to account at the muzzle of a revolver, came the memory of Colonel Richards's words that night in the Abra cañon. "It's a forlorn hope for God, my boy, with the world, the flesh, and the devil against you."

"The spawn of hell who wrote this article doubtless comes under the Colonel's third division," said Heart to himself, crushing the offending sheet into a wisp. "I suppose this attack is part of my new and greatest campaign."

Reflecting thus, he with difficulty calmed himself. Finishing his coffee, now cold in the cup, he turned to his mail, and after looking curiously over the postmarks, selected, as the first to be opened, one addressed to him in a heavy masculine hand from Iloilo. It ran:

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST:—I read recently of your transfer to the Staff at Manila. I am writing this to ask you to do me a great kindness. As I wrote to you shortly after you left us, my sister was to be invalided to Japan for a six months' recuperation in that more bracing climate. It was with difficulty that I persuaded her to go. I do not want you to reproach yourself for her sudden collapse, which, while possibly hastened

by that experience in the typhoon, was really the result of long-continued overwork. Just before she broke down completely I succeeded in getting her consent to taking the furlough. She left here on the *Tan-Auco* for Manila two months ago, arriving at Manila, where she was to transfer to the *Nippon Yusen Kaisha*, while you were up in the Abra cañon. She felt so weak upon arrival at Manila that she determined to accept the invitation of a Miss Selzer, a trained nurse at the Corregidor Hospital, to stay with her until able to proceed to Nagasaki. She has consequently been on Corregidor ever since, and has but just succeeded in gaining enough strength to proceed with her journey. When I write all the facts to the Missionary Union I think that they will probably order her home to the States. Meanwhile she will sail from Manila on the *Yezo*, of the Japanese Line, in a few days. It is impossible for me to leave my great responsibilities here to see my dear sister off, and no one will ever know just how hard it is for me to stay at my post when she needs me ever so little. Now, this is my plea: Could you not visit her at Corregidor and report to me her condition as the doctors at the hospital understand it, and then see her off to Japan? When I last saw her she was sadly changed. Her old happy disposition had left her, and I fear you will find her appearance quite a shock to you. Knowing the kindness of your heart, I venture this.

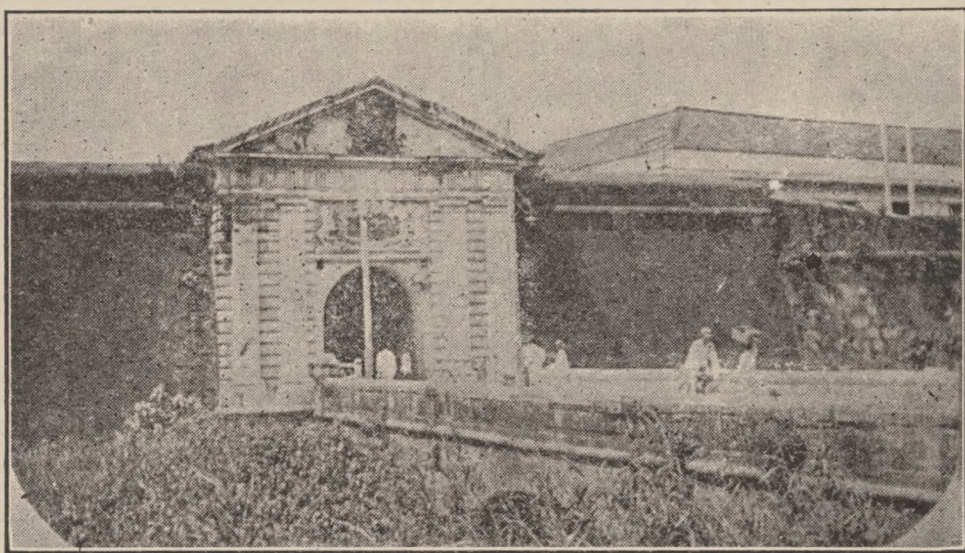
In the Great Name,

DAVIDSON DUVAL.

N.B.—Don't think I fail to carry you in my heart. At your convenience let me hear as to your own condition. I pray that your next assignment may be on the Island of Panay.

Heart read the missionary's letter carefully, twice, and sat musing a moment in his chair. Then, with a compression of his lips, he placed his remaining mail in his pocket, paid his check and left the café at a brisk walk. Going directly to the Escolta, he sought out the agent of the *Nippon Yusen Kaisha*, and found that the *Yezo* was to sail within forty-eight hours. Hastening to the "Q.M.D.," he found that a launch for the Corregidor trip would leave at

ten o'clock. His wrist watch said nine. Taking a "carromatta" back to the hotel, he made some hasty arrangements, dashed off a postal to Dr. Duval, wrapped up a *Manila Times* and mailed it to Colonel Bayard Richards, of the Engineer Corps, Washington, D.C., care Adjutant General's Office. Then, hurrying his "cochero" down through the Walled City, across the Bridge of Spain, and along the Rosario, he made the launch just as she swung



THE CITY WALL.

away from the dock. It was a close connection for a half-sick man to make, but Heart sprang over the yawning strip of water and threw a coin back to his driver on the shore.

"If I can only see her, and discharge this obligation before she sees to-day's papers," he thought to himself, as the launch snorted out of the muddy mouth of the Pasig and turned its bow toward the far-off sentinel island. "It would be impossible to face her after she sees what a curse I have brought upon her good name. Even if she has not seen those slanders, will she forget my terrible discourtesy in the 'convento'? Will she receive me at all? Well, I *must* see her. I'm starving for just a glimpse of her, and

if I do nothing else in life, I must ask her to forget my lack of chivalry to her. How the memory of my conduct has lashed me ever since that night!"

Steadily the little launch churned out into the breezy bay, first threading through the miscellany of merchant ships at anchor off the Pasig's mouth, then cutting saucily along the edge of the fleet of battleships and cruisers near Cavite Harbor, and at last working out into the open waters beyond.

Three hours lacking seven minutes had been measured by the ex-Captain's watch when the little vessel slid into the easy water at the quaint village under the Corregidor bluffs, and Heart, feeling within him a strange mixture of elation and fearfulness, stepped out on to the miniature landing and started up the path toward the Nurses' Home of the Convalescent Hospital. Its corrugated iron roof rose among the palms but a hundred yards away. He was morally certain that beneath it was the woman whom he had forever enshrined in his heart, and yet who doubtless still despised him. Summoning all his resolution he walked firmly up the gravel to the entrance, his face whiter even than usual, and his cane nervously twisting in his hand.

XIX

ON THE CARLIST PATH



HEARFULLY standing in the entrance after his card had been taken by the noiseless Chinese servant, Heart had felt more relieved than otherwise when the Celestial returned, saying that neither Miss Selzer nor "her friend" was in. Probably he would find them at the Hospital.

Leaving word that he would call again within an hour, he left the grounds and started absently along the old gravel path leading from the beach to the lighthouse upon the plateau above the little village. Captured Catalonian partizans of Don Carlos, shipped in batches from Old Spain in times gone by, had been compelled to spend their servitude in building and maintaining the somewhat elaborate trail, and although the dense growth encroached on it here and there, he found no difficulty in following it up the grade.

After climbing some twenty minutes, however, he came to a place where the luxuriant tangle of vines and ferns almost overarched him. Pressing through the soft barricade, he found the trail suddenly turning around a shoulder of the bluff and widening at a rude stone bench, the China Sea—a glorious ultra-marine blue—coming into view far below him. Instinctively pausing to drink deeply of the pleasure

of the view, he was rewarded for his sweeping glance far beyond his deserts. His eyes, coming back from the horizon line, and following the sunny slope of the bluff along which the trail was indented, rested upon a white-clad figure which, coming nearer and nearer, finally hesitated within a few paces of him and smiled in recognition. It was the form of the woman whom he loved with all the passion of his nature, and he saw with a start of fearful surprise that her face was pale and wasted, her sturdy little body woefully fallen away, and the erstwhile firm little mouth quavering with nervousness despite her smile. But the great gray eyes looked out at him as gravely, as sweetly, as on the day they first searched him in surprise on the dangerous trail to Alcala.

"Miss Grace!"

He had stepped forward, bowing reverently, and had uttered her Christian name unconsciously. Her kindly smile had meant that, in spite of his civilian dress, his partial stoop, and his scarred face, she had recognized him at once, and that he was not as unwelcome as he had feared.

If she thought him presumptuous she did not reveal it. A tinge of color spread in her cheeks, and in response to his questioning look and a wave of his hand, she seated herself on the resting-bench, looking up at him as he stood, leaning on his cane, in front of her.

"What good fortune!" he said, trying hard to speak gaily, but feeling himself growing suddenly nervous and shy. "Your brother, you know, sent me word of your being here and I—I wanted to see you very much. I thought perhaps I might be of some slight service to you in getting your stuff ready for the *Yezo*."

"It is good fortune, or better still, providential," she said in a low, almost hurried voice, "that you should give me this opportunity of seeing you before I leave. As to the boxes and trunks, friends have attended to everything, and I fear

I cannot conscientiously use you. But I am glad you came over, for another reason. You can be of great help to me."

He was feeding upon her face as she spoke, his heart increasingly dismayed as he noted more closely her weary and ill appearance.

"Pray command me," he said gravely.

"You can help me then, Captain, by just listening to me without interruption for a moment," she began, dropping her eyes before his gaze, and nervously fingering the kerchief in her lap. "I wish to apologize to you very humbly, sir. Now *don't* interrupt me, *please*. Ever since that wretched night in the 'convento,' when I said such fearful things to you, I have fairly hungered for an opportunity just to say to you frankly and without reserve that I consider myself to have been on that occasion most unpardonably insulting. And—and—*can* you forgive?"

As her sentence broke down she gave way in some confusion herself, and, bending her head, hid her face in her hands, the sudden flush of her cheek spreading to her ears and neck.

He had listened in amazement, and now looked down upon her, utterly at a loss. At last words came.

"Miss Duval," he said gently, "your words pain me deeply. You are greatly over-wrought. I am the one to talk that way. If there ever was an unchivalrous, mean-spirited ass, I was that character. When I should have spent every ounce of my strength and every bit of my ingenuity to protect you from the slightest disagreeable thing, I woefully betrayed my trust. True, not all you said to me that night was entirely just, but I, not you, am to blame for the whole wretched episode. If *you* could only forgive!"

His last words were hardly more than a husky whisper. Her face was still bowed, the soft breezes stirring the wavy brown hair revealed beneath the light straw "sombbrero." There was a half-minute of utter silence while the bright

afternoon sun shone around them, and the call of the seagulls came up to them from far below. At length she dropped her hands in her lap, and bravely tried to raise her eyes to his.

"It was *not* 'a wretched episode,'" she said softly. "I stood for the conventionalities that night. But I have often thought since that true love is very careless of conventionalities. In place of being bitter I should have been grateful. Whatever might have been the answer of my heart to your declaration, I should at least have remembered that a brave soldier's love—a *true Christian's love*—is always an honor to the one to whom it is offered."

The unmistakable significance of her words awed him into a moment of absolute happiness.

"Thank you," he said simply. "My love is always offered you, you know. I can't change that part of me. The day we met on the Alcala trail it was all settled for me. I'm very thankful, too. It has been God's own gift to me, Miss Duval. It won me back to my soldierliness and it led me to the Master."

Her eyes grew misty with tears.

"I'm so glad," she said. "I was afraid for a time that I had not only wronged you, but driven you from the Master. That I could not have endured. Oh, it has meant so much to me to hear about you since you left us for the Hospital at Manila—how that you have been so true, so earnest for Christ."

She bent her head again. The vibrant tenderness in her voice suggested a wonderful possibility to Heart. Moved by Love's unerring instinct, he dropped at her side upon the bench.

"About my—loving you," he said. "I'm afraid I shall always have to do it. It won't annoy you, will it? The thought that I shall always hope against hope isn't entirely abhorrent to you, is it, Miss Grace?"

A long pause. His ear, bending to catch her answer, heard her breathe rapidly.

At last the lowered eyes came bravely to meet his burning ones.

"No," she breathed.

As the soft syllable of hope entered his waiting, eager soul, his hand reached automatically for the pale little fingers lying tremblingly in her lap. Something in those dear gray eyes, something in the slowly crimsoning face, told him that his moment of triumph had come. For weary months he had never dared to hope for such an easy realization of his life dreams as he now saw prophesied in the swimming, trusting, loving eyes which wavered in his glance.

But even as he reached to clasp her hand a sudden chilling thought deterred him, and he arose to his feet.

"Look up at me, Miss Grace," he commanded.

Misunderstanding him, she obeyed, the color ebbing and flowing, but the gray eyes fearlessly lighting with the pure fire of her unashamed love for the man who stood before her. Had he met her look squarely he must have had his doubts slain then and there, and could have claimed with joy his wonderful heritage. But his eyes did not meet hers. He was searching the hollow lines of her face and crying within himself, "Ho! ho! soul of mine! So this is thy new found chivalry, is it! Would'st thou take advantage of a weary, overwrought girl whose tender conscience is making her a sacrifice? Would'st show thy repentance for a former discourtesy by taking advantage of her nervous and morbid desire to atone for her past misunderstanding of you? Go to, be a *man*! be a *Christian*! The child knoweth not her own mind."

And with a soldier's promptness he sacrificed himself with hardly other outward evidence than a sudden clenching of his fingers around his cane-handle. Relinquishing

his inspection of her face, he attempted to straighten himself to the old erectness which had once characterized him.

"Miss Duval," he said formally, almost coldly. "I am becoming unpardonable again. Time is short between this and the sailing of the *Yezo*. May I not escort you down to the village?"

She, noticing the sudden change in his manner, had veiled her ardent, hopeful eyes, and, arising quietly to obey his suggestion, found herself weak and tremulous.

In silence they slowly descended the path until the last bend in it brought into view the roof of the Nurses' Home nestling in the palms ahead. A few steps further, and a cross-trail leading to the boat-landing caused Heart suddenly to stop and pretend to consult his wrist-watch. It was merely a pretense, for he saw nothing but the white blurr of its face, the mist in his eyes making the figures on the dial undistinguishable. Stopping at his side, she intuitively knew that the moment of parting had come.

He faced her with an effort.

"Miss Duval, only your assurance that I cannot be of any service whatever in the matter of your luggage prevents me from accompanying you the few remaining steps to the Home. I see that the launch is just about to start on its return trip to the city. I—I do not dare to trust myself to say anything about my hopes for you—for your health, your recovery in full, your return. God knows my heart. You have given me some hope that after all you believe in the reality of my Christian profession. May I not then say, as my parting word, that I shall be most constant in prayer for Heaven's richest blessings to be upon you? And now, farewell. May the cool, healing air of the Sunrise Kingdom be a medicine to you, and may God's grace surround you. There is nothing better than the old 'adios.'"

She listened quietly as he spoke, a piteous little quiver trembling across a face once more bloodless and drawn.

"Adios," she echoed wistfully.

Repressing with grim resolution a battling desire to pour out his heart to her, and passionately claim the right to minister to her out of the abounding wealth of his love, he raised his hat formally and turned down the cross-trail toward the dock, walking half-blindly over the gravel, and uneasily conscious of the fact that she had not stirred from the spot where he had left her.

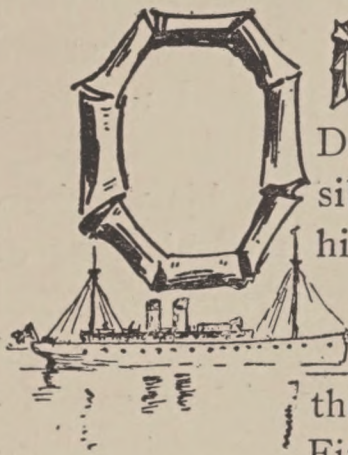
At the debouching of the trail upon the little pier, he felt himself compelled to turn and look back. He had covered a considerable distance, but could still make her out quite plainly, and he was never to forget the almost pathetic simplicity of her attitude as she stood, her hands clasped lightly in front, her face still turned down the leafy avenue through which he had just come.

"Dear little white angel!" he whispered to himself—and, half-ashamed, ventured to wave his hand in a last adieu.

Either she did not see or did not care to respond, for she remained quite motionless, her white-clad form marked in statuesque clearness against the deep green of the huge ferns at her back.

XX

THE NEW BROTHER AT THE BAPTIST MISSION



N the very day that Heart had sailed from Manila to Iloilo to interview Dr. Davidson Duval concerning the possibility of a missionary career on Panay, his old commander, General Mercer Hugelot, had embarked on the United States Army transport *Logan* for the States, and with him went the fighting Fifty-fifth, homeward bound with an honorable record and with only two clouded faces among its many officers, the respective countenances of Dr. Jim Hilton and Lieutenant Monty Smith. And flowing into the dusty capital to take their places came a brand-new regiment whose rawness was fitly symbolized by their English-aping cork helmets and their utter contempt for the dangers of excessive alcohol in the tropics.

Under the new regime the "bino" joints flourished from Iloilo to Capiz, and from Dumangas to San José de Buena Vista.

Some three weeks after the command had settled itself in the Province a group of its officers gathered under the grateful shade of the corrugated-iron awning in front of Povey's notorious dive in Iloilo. They were busily discussing a topic of more than usual interest.

The chief speaker was our old friend, Lieutenant Turenne,

looking a trifle coarser than when we last saw him at Ignotan. The only officer of the Fifty-fifth to remain behind, he had been transferred at his own request to the newcomers, and was acting as Provost-Marshal of Iloilo.

✓ "Yes, gentlemen," he remarked languidly, "it was the biggest circus I was ever in, and one of the surprises of my life as well. You understand that my duties include supervision of all public gatherings of natives, both here and at Jaro and Molo. That nigger-loving Baptist missionary Duval has been an object of suspicion to me for some time, and when, in passing through Jaro last night, I saw a crowd of 'Khakiaks' jammed into his meeting-place, I naturally pushed up to the door and looked in."

Here Turenne stopped to sip appreciatively his whiskey-and-soda, and note the respectful attention of his ring of auditors. He then continued:

✓ "The place was fairly steaming with Visayans. I could hardly get standing-room near the entrance. They were literally two deep all over, and it took me some minutes to make out the business in hand. First they all whined off a couple of songs; then Duval rose up with that pious air of his, and worked off an unctuous prayer in the jargon, and then came a good deal of fussing about a triple-plated reading of the Bible in English, dialect, and Spanish. At this point I became satisfied that they were harmless fools and not a band of Katapunan in disguise, and I was elbowing my way out again when the whole outfit rose to their feet, and began stretching their necks toward the front. Looking with the rest I made out an American mounting the platform, and shaking hands with the chief Visayan swells, who were seated around Duval. Something about the fellow jarred my memory, and I recognized him in spite of his changed appearance. You fellows probably know all about that queer resignation from the Service that the papers were full of a while ago, but you may not know that the

notorious Captain Heart and I were at one time pretty good friends. That, of course, was before he marked himself out as a poltroon.

"Well, the fellow on the platform was my erstwhile brother-officer of the Fifty-fifth, Captain Herbert Heart, and while I stood there with my mouth open looking at him it suddenly occurred to me that the purpose of the meeting was to make the renegade into a missionary, and I naturally lent all my eyes and ears. First came speeches by Duval, three Visayans (one of them that ugly little Domingo I've told you about), and a last one by Heart himself. I didn't make out much of his talk. It was in pretty ragged Visayan. Then, after the speeches, they made Heart get down on his knees before the crowd and a half-dozen old grey-headed 'insurrectos' knelt around him in a circle, with their right hands piled on his head. Then came a patter of prayer from all over the room, with the chief effort from Duval, and then a doxology from the whole crowd. This wound up the ceremony, and I pushed out feeling like jailing the whole outfit. Think of it, gentlemen! Think of letting a lot of dirty 'Khakiaks' run their fingers through your hair and slobber over you in make-believe prayers! Ye gods, I would have believed Heart stark mad if I didn't happen to know what his real malady is."

"Where is he cracked, Turenne?" asked one of his listeners."

"Oh, he's after Duval's sister. Anything goes with him until he gets her. And, by the gods, I don't blame him much. She is a dainty little miracle."

Here three officers at least lost their careless attitudes and leaned forward in genuine intensity.

"Duval got a sister?" asked a blear-eyed Captain, instinctively running his hand over his unshaven face, and straightening himself to his most martial "pigeon-breast." "Strange we haven't seen her."

"He's the brother of a beauty," said Turenne, grinning at their sudden seriousness. "But unfortunately for us all she's recently returned to the States."

"Why doesn't this fellow Heart follow her up, then? He can't find it very pleasant here after the way the Manila papers roasted him."

"Oh, I reckon she's put him on probation or suspicion or something. Mark my words, gentlemen, she'll be back here inside of six months, and the hoped-for consummation will take place as per private schedule."

Turenne's voice contained so grating an emphasis that one or two looked at him in something of surprise. Could it be possible that the dashing Provost-Marshal had strong feelings on the subject of women missionaries himself?

His next words allayed suspicion.

Rising to his feet, and flipping the dust from his leggings with his light rattan cane, he said carelessly:

"Don't miss that affair at Gonzale's to-night. Little Pa-peete is worth your time alone. And I hear that the pretty batch of 'mestizos' from Molo are coming over to fight her for the supremacy. Now that we've taught the fair Visayan daughters our waltzes they are worth a man's while. *Adios!*"

* * * * *

Turenne was right concerning Heart's ordination. In a service which fairly shook his soul with its intense fervor, and melted him to the humility of a little child with its warmth of brotherly love, Heart had had the ordaining hands of Davidson Duval and his Visayan assistants placed upon his bowed head during the ordaining prayer, and had been solemnly initiated into the greatest career and the most tremendous responsibility of human life—the responsibility and career of a prophet and teacher of God amidst a degraded and Christless people. For hours after his return from the public service at Jaro he had knelt in an

agony of prayer in the flimsy old building on Calle Concepcion, pleading again and again that the greatness of his work might not overwhelm him, and that great grace might be vouchsafed to him to atone for his lack of special fitness and training.

The following day he had begun the routine of his labors with an enthusiasm he had never felt before, either in studio or barracks. A natural student, he took to his morning studies in the Visayan dialect with avidity, and as the weeks came and went in rapid succession, his appetite for biblical studies under Dr. Duval's tutelage grew stronger and stronger. The mingling of the intellectual and the ethical in the wise courses prepared for him in the Life of Christ, the Apostolic Church, and Christian Doctrines, opened up a world of delight to him, and each morning found him bravely poring over his books in the hot, close atmosphere of the humble mission-house. Afternoons found him regularly at the dispensary, picking up a good deal of practical medicine, and nursing and relieving his senior of much petty detail. He soon began gradually to visit in the "nipa" houses of the native Baptists, holding personal conversations with many who were anxious to know more of the Protestant position. Democratic both by nature and grace, he soon won a large measure of devotion from the disciples, and the prestige of his splendid army record served him well in getting the attention of otherwise indifferent Visayans of the higher classes. His evenings were mainly given to additional study, or in accompanying Dr. Duval out to nearby "barrios" and trying his increasing Visayan vocabulary upon the curious and polite little audiences.

At the end of six months his new vocation had gripped him with tremendous force, and, utterly lost in it, the soreness of his heart over his treatment by many old Army friends was gradually assuaged, and a new peace came into his life of which all the curious or averted looks of the brand-

new regiment and all the bitter reproach and expostulation from friends all over the world could not rob him. In due time, amongst the many angry letters of his suddenly increased mail, two had arrived from his mother. The first had been written by her immediately upon reading Associated Press items in regard to his resignation. The second had been penned hurriedly just after Colonel Bayard Richards had visited in the old Wolverine homestead. The first had been almost hysterical, but the second was calm, loving, commendatory, praiseful. A brief note from the Colonel himself had been a characteristic tonic. "Don't worry, Herbert," it had read. "The newspapers always *will* get it wrong. Why, once they called me a 'bottle-scarred veteran,' and when I expostulated they came out in their next issue with it changed to 'battle-scared veteran.' So what's the use! You have as many real friends as ever, several new admirers, and all of my love.

"Mercer Hugelet and I had a battle-royal about you yesterday, and I made a Sedan out of him."

But the work was Heart's chief medicine, and as the great conception of the Kingdom of God grew upon him in his daily study of the inspired documents of the New Testament, he rejoiced in spirit that to him, a humble disciple in the end of the ages, was it given to apply the mighty purpose and plans of his Leader to the problems and needs of an ignorant and superstitious, yet promising and plastic people. In his hours of meditation he often found a profound intellectual exercise in an attempt to grasp something of the scope of the evident program of the Redeemer, as set forth in the Gospels and condensed in the Great Commission. After such efforts he often recurred with a smile to that time in his life, not far past, when he had conceived of the Christian ministry as a narrow profession, and its sphere of operation decidedly limited. More and more he was coming to see that Colonel Richards' prophecy was to

come true—he was to find in his new calling a constant demand for every element of his varied personality, for the utmost of his thinking, of his loving, and of his ability in administering. He was finding not only his task and his God, but—*himself*.

One day at luncheon, seated opposite his bearded senior, he suddenly pushed aside his chocolate cup and abruptly said: "Doctor, I've something to say."

The other man raised his kindly face expectantly, and Heart continued:

"Did I understand that you expected your sister to resume her work with you here in Jaro?"

"It has been my constant prayer, Brother Herbert. She needs a longer rest, but the Society writes me that new men are scarce, and what with the increased needs of Burma, Japan, and Africa, my field here can hardly hope for speedy reinforcement. The ministry at home seems to hold back nine out of ten of our seminary graduates, and, knowing as I do the great need of hard work here just now, if we are to deliver this people from priestcraft and yet not allow them to drift into free-thinking, I felt justified in urging Grace to hasten her return to me. And, by the way, Herbert, I believe I have failed to give you a little message she sent you in her last letter to me. She wished me to say that your decision for the vocation of a missionary was a clear bugle note to her own soul, calling her to a more intense consecration, and the thought that I had been reinforced by you has taken a great burden from her heart. I'm afraid she has been unnecessarily worrying about me."

Heart's face was non-committal, and his companion failed to notice the trembling of his hand as he toyed with his saucer.

"Very kind of her to remember me," he replied evenly. "Will she, then, in your judgment, resume her work here in the near future?"

"I have faith to believe so," said Duval hopefully, his mobile face lighting up. "Grace has never failed to respond when I have felt compelled to call her to me. And, besides, she writes me of a great improvement in her health."

For a moment Heart sat motionless and thoughtful, and then gradually led the conversation into other channels, but the usual topics were soon exhausted, and Duval at length broke with them abruptly by saying,

"Oh, by the way, what was on your mind a few minutes ago? Did I understand that you wished my advice on some matter?"

"Yes, to be sure, Doctor. We have drifted a little from the subject, haven't we? This was what I had upon my heart—I desire to launch out into the interior, and establish, with your permission, a second station in the midst of the 'barrio' country, say at Carisinan or Marotac. You have put a pretty good life-belt about me. Now throw me out into the deep, please, and well away from Jaro."

The eyes of the missionary sparkled.

"You're a man, Herbert!" he cried delightedly. "Why, I've been dreaming for a year of the time when we could send some one up to Marotac to minister to those simple-hearted and comparatively unspoiled 'barrio' people. Praise to the mighty Name! This is nothing less than the Master's leading. Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but the Father who is in heaven!"

Heart felt the color come into his face at this unmerited praise. He was well conscious that his motive in asking to be sent into the interior was a very mixed one, the predominant element being a panicky fear that Grace might come back to Jaro and find him there. For well he knew that a hundred tongues would hail so delicious an item with a delirium of gossip.

"We'll fix you out next week," were Duval's last words. "I can't very well leave the dispensary and other work here,

as you know, but Domingo and Stefano will go into the hills with you and get you started in the work at Marotac. They will like nothing better."

"No need of diverting Domingo and Stefano from their regular tours," objected Heart firmly. "I want to help and not hinder. I've picked up a man from Romblon 'barrio,' seven miles from Marotac. He is bright and in earnest, and will be an excellent henchman for me. Now what can you spare me in the way of Testaments and other supplies?"

Five days after this conversation two events of interest marked the life of Davidson Duval. He conscientiously noted them down in his well-worn journal.

"JARO, June 11th, 1900.—Captain Heart started at 5 a.m. with a supply of Testaments, leaflets, hymn-books and other Visayan literature, to open up a station at Marotac in the 'barrio' country to the north. He has been wonderfully led hitherto, and I do not fear but that he will be prospered of God. After watching his ox-cart out of sight I felt a little lonesome, for we have come to love each other as David and Jonathan, and I went into Iloilo for the mail. To my great joy I received a letter from Grace. She writes that she will sail from Seattle for Yokohama not later than August, and should without fail be able to spend Thanksgiving Day with me. Praise to the Mighty Name! I am not forgotten."

XXI

THE PROPHET OF PANAY



CASUAL visitor to the Philippine Archipelago is usually content with touching the mere rim of things. He stays on his steamer or dallies amid the streets of the little ports while his vessel discharges her merchandise or loads her sugar, rice or tobacco, and hence never knows the lazy mystery of the simple life in the "barrios." To such of us as have baked in the saddle across the divides of Luzon and Panay, it seems altogether natural that Heart should find compensations at Marotac. At Iloilo there was an ice-plant and a laundry, also the latest papers (six weeks old) and stray magazines; but at Marotac there was the attraction of a typically Malayan life, and a population with something of the dignity and modesty of the primitive Visayan, as yet unspoiled by English trader or Spanish priest.

He had chosen the new center for several reasons. It was a widely-known market-town, although high perched among the foot-hills, and central Panay flowed to it with weekly regularity. Then, too, the religion of its people was of a more simple type of Catholicism than in the more cosmopolitan towns nearer the Coast. But mainly he had gone to Marotac because of the absence of an American garrison in the place, for he was in no humor to trim his actions to suit

the arbitrary policy of the new force of occupation. He knew the Army too well, and loved its higher traditions too dearly to feel at ease in a town where some slave of military theory, some little autocrat encased in narrow professionalism, "bossed" the Filipinos and tyrannized over his own men through sheer delight in new-found authority. He had avoided, as far as possible, the successors to the Fifty-fifth, but had noticed with amusement their aping of German visors and English helmets and leggings. For the men, sullen and harassed looking, he had sympathy, but the red faces of the "whiskey-and-soda" officers, with their turned up mustaches and their "corset-waists," aroused only his dislike. Stories of harsh treatment of natives had not seldom come to his ears, and, on the whole, he felt that he could do his work better in a community without a garrison.

Thus he found himself in a native town of several thousand people, entirely unarmed save for a stock of Bibles and a trunk of civilian clothes, and accompanied only by a wiry little Baptist colporter known as Samson.

But, with his mind kindling with the thought of his difficulties, he rented a house, explained the meaning of his descent to the surprised and perplexed "presidente," and went cheerfully to work to overcome the natural suspicion of the people. His plan of campaign involved no little hardship to himself, for he was unaccustomed to native foods, and suffered some in body as a consequence, but his fourth month of "barrio" life found him well adjusted to his environment, and better initiated into the humble life about him than any less drastic method than actually living among them would have permitted. For instance, he saw plainly what hitherto had been a matter of suspicion only, that the so-called Catholic Church of the Philippines was inimical to the higher interests of the Visayans. Despite a reluctance springing both from his natural fair-mindedness and his warmth of heart in his newly found Christian life,

he was compelled to conclude that a church which refused to bury a corpse unless the relatives paid well, and even then dug up the remains if a yearly rental on the grave was not forthcoming, was not according to the mind of Christ. With increasing pain and indignation, he secured evidence of the dense ignorance of the Catholic-trained native "padres," and found that their chief equipment for fighting tuba-drinking, cock-pit gambling, and a thousand other sins amongst their own people seemed to be confined to a qualified ability to *say the Mass in Latin!* They knew no science, no history, no geography, no Bible, and little even of their own Church and its pretensions. He found that the exorbitant marriage fees of these supposed guardians of public morality were so large that the marriage relation was entered into by most of the people without any ceremony or guarantees of any kind. Sermons were rarely preached, and remote chapels in the poorer "barrios" were only visited when a tidy sum could be realized. The best house in each town or "barrio" was invariably the priest's, and in the old Spanish days the hierarchy had perfected in each parish a pocket-filling system which would have compelled the admiration of any American "captain of industry." For the benefit of the padres every tallow candle was necessarily "blessed"—for a consideration—ere it could be lit, and even women's veils and children's shoes paid a percentage to the pockets of the favorites of God. Their power to tax directly was now gone, but, with the burying-grounds, the marriage altars, and the baptismal fonts in their possession, they were still the selfish oppressors of the poor and the perverters of the gospel of the One who said, "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." In some cases, both at Marotac and in near-by places, Heart found among the padres men of natural intelligence, good-nature and fair intentions. But their utter lack of spiritual travail over their flocks, their ignorance of all else in the world save

Madrid and Manila, and their extremely fanatical fear for the integrity of their privileges, made it almost impossible for him to help them. This he tried to do, however, and while winning a padre at Marotac and one at Sigbunan to the new life in Christ, he only succeeded in arraying the



LITTLE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES

bulk of them more solidly against him; and what with their natural influence and the effect of their industrious maligning of him, there was more than one sharp crisis in his first preaching tours. Of insurgents he had no fear, for the entire island had become remarkably quiet, save for ladrone raids on exposed points. But the increasing bitterness of the alarmed priesthood dug many a pit for him.

His vocabulary was soon much improved, and he was pleased to find that, impromptu-missionary as he was, the people listened to him with increasing interest. He now knew something of a missionary's practical problems, and, without losing his enthusiasm, became decidedly wiser in

his methods. Realizing, too, his great lack of training, he eagerly devoured such books as were sent up to him over the trails from Dr. Duval's scanty library. "Read them before the ants finish them," had been Duval's message, and in quick succession Heart opened his soul to vivid impressions of Wesley, Bunyan, Francis of Assisi, Moody, Brooks, Spurgeon, Broadus, Luther, Pierson and Savonarola. Each in turn had their chance at his eager mind, and although their inspiration came to him in miscellaneous bits and at odds and ends of his hard-working days, they combined with his increasing appetite for his English Bible to mold him into a workman who needed not to be ashamed.

Time went on. Rain gave place to dust. Feeling the momentum of his influence among the people increasing, he did not spare himself, but reached out farther and farther in his journeys, accompanied by Samson and the evangelical priests, and cheered on by an ever-enlarging circle of disciples. Soon came the joy of his first baptisms. Leading twelve men into the cool current of the Rio Verde, far up at its rising in the hills, he baptized them into the name of his Thrice-Revealed God, while the natives looked on in amazement, seeing a Scriptural baptism for the first time in their lives. At length the active opposition of the padres was unable to cope with his doctrines longer, and on his circuit of eight or nine mountain "barrios" he always found a crowd at the plaza awaiting him. Then, placing as much responsibility as he dared upon his dusky coadjutors, he fearfully sent them out to multiply the truth, and found to his joy that their lives were staunch and their witness effective. A few of his workers failed him, but the many were true as steel.

As a result of his active campaigning, increased orders for Visayan Testaments and other supplies poured into Iloilo and overwhelmed the little station where Duval struggled on alone, without the hoped-for reinforcements. Word

had come to the veteran missionary that a canvass of the denominational seminaries gave but little promise of even a tithe of their flesh and blood for the "firing-line" of the kingdom of God, and as for more money, the rich Baptists of the home-land were still tightly clutching their stocks and bonds and going regularly to church.

But Duval did the best he could in response to Heart's appeal for workers and supplies. He worked overtime on his own station, and still found time for sending his remaining few supplies and messages of good cheer to Marotac, praying as he did so that Grace, now out on the Pacific, might safely come to him, and that the slumbering host of God at home might be aroused to forward, of its many men, at least a handful for the redemption of the Visayans.

One secret of Heart's success amid the "barrios" was his constant emphasis of Philippine *independencia*. This he defined to mean, not a political separation from the American Government, but a political, commercial and spiritual development under American protection and tutelage. They were, he pointed out to them, already admitting the futility of fighting longer against the "North Americans." Everywhere the remnants of the Insurgent Army were coming into the American lines, and abandoning their hopeless attempt, and only the ladrones were in the field, and they, not for *independencia*, but for plunder. True independence meant independence of mind, attained by modern knowledge, and independence of immorality and selfishness, attained by accepting Christ as Lord and Master. He prophesied often in all the "barrios" that the United States would soon send them teachers to emancipate them from ignorance, and when the first groups of American teachers actually landed in Cuba and Panay, he was hailed as a veritable prophet. The cleaner living of those who were beginning to class themselves as "Protestants," and especially the marked change in those who were received into his band

by baptism, gave great emphasis to his words concerning independence from sin, and only a brief six months from the time he had creaked out of Iloilo in his ox-cart and taken the trail to Marotac, he had the satisfaction of counting five staunch little apostolic churches in and near his station.

During all this time his contact with the troops had been limited to the occasional meeting with a patrol. There was practically no active resistance to American sovereignty around Marotac, and the new Department Commander at Iloilo hardly made his power felt beyond organizing the "barrio" police and arming them with captured Mausers. On the rare occasions when Heart did see the old uniform and insignia, he invariably felt that the patrols had been told queer things about himself, for they stared at him dubiously and, usually in command of "non-coms," passed him in some embarrassment.

Just at the beginning of his seventh month at Marotac he was riding along a rather dangerous trail some miles north of the town, in company with a native disciple known as Pedro, both being mounted upon sturdy little ponies. Turning the shoulder of a hill at the close of the day, he saw in the dusk ahead a cheerful campfire burning at the edge of the trail, and was an instant later halted by a sentry.

Satisfied with their "cedulas," the guard jealously allowed them to pass, but as they trotted on by the bivouac the officer in command stepped out into the road and raised his hand.

"Stay and have some dinner with me, Reverend," he said as they reined in. "I'm fearfully lonesome to-night, and there are two chickens in immediate prospect."

Heart looked rather wistfully down into the frank face of the would-be host.

"I have a friend with me," he said, hesitatingly. "We will make his 'barrio' only three miles farther on."

"There is plenty for the three of us," was the hearty re-

sponse, and the two travelers tumbled out of their saddles and tied their horses to the bamboos.

A few minutes later Lieutenant Billy Ludlow was volubly entertaining his guests, as the three sat around an appetizing meal in the glow of a crackling fire.

"You are new to Panay?" suggested Heart, after a long and inspiring seance over his share of the chicken.

"Fresh from the States, sir," said Billy. "This is my first experience with the gentle Filipino. Word came up to Alcala three days ago that the ladrones were pretty sassy along this trail. I used to rustle the Apaches a little along the Rio Grande, and they sent me up here instead of the Captain. Great luck, isn't it?"

For an instant Heart hesitated to continue the conversation. All the soreness had not quite disappeared from his soul over the treatment accorded him by the Army circles at the time of his resignation. But the cheerful face and clear blue eyes of little Ludlow reassured him.

"I was formerly stationed at Alcala myself," he said quietly, meeting the raised eyes of his host.

Billy showed no surprise.

"Oh, I know all about that," he said cheerfully. "You see you are a sort of Current Event for the Alcala plaza-gossips. They've chewed the rag about you a good deal since I reported there a few weeks ago."

Heart smiled.

"I presume Najera remembers me?"

"You mean that lantern-jawed son of conspiracy who runs the Alcala church? Oh, he hasn't forgot you—not by a good deal! But most of the people down there worship you, Captain. They worship you too much for comfort. Why, it doesn't matter how well I behave myself, that saucy little daughter of old Don Rodrigo tells me that the last batch of officers in Alcala beat me into a pudding both for manners and sense!"

The frankly rueful voice of Billy was so droll that Heart forgot the burdens of his mind and heart, and laughed aloud.

"Look out, Lieutenant! That little Mercedes had my post-doctor all disorganized with one volley of her bright eyes. The power of old Spain is not yet all spent. Beware of a Castillian ambush."

"Good advice," assented Billy solemnly. "But it's no use to give it now. I was disorganized myself a week after I hit Alcala, and inside of ten days I was put to rout, chased, captured and annexed. There is subtle policy in my offering you this chicken to-night, for it's no telling how suddenly I might need you a little later on."

"No wonder you plastered that fearsome title of 'Reverend' on to me at the very start," said Heart, still laughing. "What with that gentle, delicate compliment and this appetizing chicken, I'm entirely at your service. And to tell the honest truth, I wouldn't mind it a bit if brave little Mercedes, with her snapping eyes and the good sturdy blood of the old Don in her veins, should find a true soldier lad to lead her to the altar."

At seven o'clock Heart and his companion arose to depart, but Ludlow bade them wait an instant, and, disappearing into a rude shelter which his men had prepared for him for the night, he soon reappeared with a mail bag in his hand.

"Just a minute before you go, sir. My men found this on the San Stefano trail this morning. There were signs of a struggle and most of these letters were scattered in the mud. I reckon the carrier was taken off by the ladrones. Now I was looking over some of the addresses, and if I remember aright there is something here for you."

Taking the leathern bag by its bottom, Ludlow unceremoniously dumped the contents out in the light of his fire, and then, squatting beside them, passed them over hastily, while Heart looked on with interest.

"Yes, here she is," said Billy presently, holding up a mud-splotched square envelope with one hand, but still stirring the remaining missives with the other. "I was sure there was one. Maybe there is another. This was Marotac mail mostly."

His eyes were still on the pile before him, and he did not notice the flush of red which swept the face of the young missionary as he perused the finely penned address. Not only had his pale face taken fire, but an unreasonable weakness suddenly seized him, and he involuntarily thrust the note into his pocket and leaned heavily on the shoulder of sturdy little Pedro, who was looking at him with kindly intentness.

"You are well, señor?" he asked in Visayan.

Heart straightened with an effort, nodded reassuringly, and then, noticing that the Lieutenant was replacing the letters in the pouch, he made his adieux, and was soon in his saddle. The Lieutenant insisted upon accompanying them beyond his sentries, and the two Americans shook hands warmly as they parted. As they did so Pedro uttered a few eager sentences in the dialect to Heart, who reined in his starting pony and said quietly:

"By the way, Lieutenant Ludlow, Pedro here reminds me of a duty I owe you. The plague is breaking out in the 'barrios' near you. As you return to Alcala, it might be as well for you to avoid Binalogan. The plague, you understand, is far more dangerous than the small-pox, and the greatest precautions are in order for the bravest of men."

"Much obliged to you," said Ludlow warmly. "I'm pretty green on these native diseases yet. I'll do as you say, sir. But aren't you both headed for Binalogan yourselves to-night?"

"It is because of the plague that we are going there. I am something of a 'medico,' and the presidente of the 'barrio' sent Pedro over to Marotac for me this noon. Good-

bye, Lieutenant. I won't forget your hospitality. It seemed good to have a little taste of the old Army again. God bless you!"

As the ponies started away, Ludlow answered mechanically and remained in the road, gloomily staring after them long after the darkness of the palms had blotted them out, and even his ear could no longer catch the sound of their thudding hoofs.

"Say," he said to himself quite abruptly, "I didn't know that fighting the plague was part of the missionary business. I always supposed it was mostly tongue work!"

Then, before he turned back to his fire and blanket, he did a strange thing. He faced down the trail toward Binalogan, straightened his little figure to a rigid "Attention," and raised his hand in an elaborate salute.

* * * * *

"Just a moment, Pedro!"

Heart had reined in his pony at the outskirts of Binalogan, with the soft blackness of the tropical night all around him, and had laid a detaining hand on his companion's arm.

Both ponies stood motionless while the missionary fumbled in his blouse for the letter and a box of matches.

"Here, Pedro, I wish to read this. There is no wind. Keep a match burning till I finish."

Pedro in obedience struck a succession of short-lived lights while the American spread out the precious message, and read it with a throbbing pulse, the paper trembling before him as his nervous hand endeavored in vain to hold it steadily.

"Dear Captain Heart:

"Davidson doesn't expect me until the 27th, but I am planning to surprise him on the 18th. If it were only possible for you to meet me in Iloilo and drive me out to the Jaro meeting (it will be on Tuesday), the surprise will be quite dramatic. I know that you are away up at Marotac,

but Davidson has written me that you are terribly over-worked, and need a respite. But not for your own sake, but for ours, I am asking you not to disappoint me.

"Your sister in Christ,

GRACE DUVAL."

Heart held the letter a moment after reading it, and then folded it reverently and placed it in an inner pocket, where it rustled against a second letter, frayed and limp, but engrossed in the same feminine hand, a letter which had hitherto held its little sanctuary alone ever since a memorable morning at Alcala when it had come, a blue leaf of healing to a tormented mind.

The letter put away, the missionary still sat quietly in his saddle, answering the problem as to whether it should be Iloilo or Binalogan. He sat so quietly that his companion stirred uneasily, and wondered whether the all-wise "ministerio" had forgotten the plague-alarmed homes of the "barrio" ahead.

As if to answer his unspoken question, Heart suddenly started his pony forward, and, side by side, they entered the muddy single street of Binalogan, and the reek and horror of the Plague.

XXII

THE TENT AMONG THE PALMS



P in the private office of Surgeon-major Carter, of the Brigade Hospital at Iloilo, that keen-eyed officer and a newly arrived brother physician were intently studying a small glass slide. First one and then the other screwed down the microscope on it and looked long and carefully. This ended, they looked at each other significantly. The Major was scowling as if in anger.

"Anything else we could have met," he said impatiently.

"You have no doubt remaining?" gravely asked the younger man, his anxious, short-sighted eyes blinking through his glasses.

"Not an iota. You noted how the stain took in the ends of the bacilli. It is useless for us to attempt to disguise the fact that the finding of the short-rod bacillus is our last sentence in the diagnosis. Heart is down with nothing less than the bubonic, Dr. Hilton. In fact, we have known for some time that our so-called typhus cases were something far worse. It was when I became convinced that we were dealing with the Black Death that I sent that call to Manila."

"But it doesn't seem possible that the bubonic should

have broken out in those comparatively clean 'barrios,' " objected the younger man.

"Those filthy Chinese traders at Binalogan are undoubtedly responsible for the starting of it. They came down from Manila a few weeks ago on the *Rizal*, and Townsend of the Manila Board reports thirty new cases daily just now from the Chinese quarter. But there was plenty of filth in the 'barrios' to keep it going, once it started. Now about Heart—don't feel too badly. If he is to live, worrying on your part is ruled out, and if he is not to live you will have the satisfaction of knowing that he makes his exit with the applause of every decent man in Panay ringing in his ears. Why, do you know, sir, that that man with his little stock of medicines and disinfectants, shipped up to him by Duval, fought the plague in Binalogan single-handed until he had the 'barrio' well in hand? Toward the last they say he staggered around like a drunken man with those awful racking first symptoms. And when my men got there he was raving in an infected shack where he had gone to superintend the removal of a 'Chino.' "

Hilton sank into a chair, his face reflecting the anguish of his heart.

"Where is he now?" he asked heavily. "Out at Quarantine Camp?"

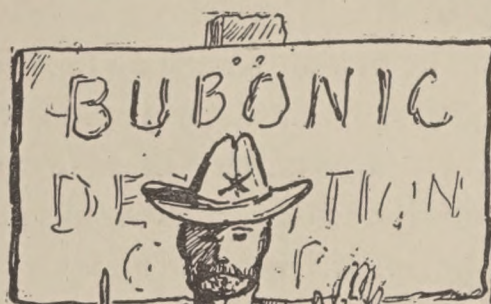
"Yes; they have fixed up a special tent for him a little to one side of the main camp. He's getting pretty fair attention, but I am personally glad to have you on duty out there. I understood you to ask for that assignment, did I not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, rest up to-day. You must be jaded with your trip. You can go out to Camp in the morning. You came down on the *El Cano*, did you not? How was the passenger list?"

"If you will allow me, Major, I should greatly prefer to

go to work at once this afternoon. The Third Battalion of the Fifty-fifth was in Guam, you know, when the order came for them to take charge again here. When we reached Ma-



nila I heard of your call for aid, and came on ahead. But the whole battalion will be in port here to-morrow or next day. The list of the *El Cano* was pretty slim, sir, on account of the plague. But, strange to say, Miss Duval, of the Baptist Mission, was on board. She doesn't seem to have any element of fear in her make-up."

A look of quick interest brightened the Major's stern face.

"Plucky girl!" he said. "And I'm afraid she is going to have her heart broken, too. Of course I didn't believe those accursed insinuations of the Manila papers, but I cannot help feeling that there is something between her and Heart. And if so, God pity

her when the news reaches her to-day!"

Hilton arose. The Major shook his hand warmly.

"Take good care of yourself, Hilton," he said gruffly. "Do what you can for Heart. Your tent is already pitched just inside the lines. Have your stuff sent right out to it. Remember, I'm behind you for all I'm worth, but may the curse of all the Fates rest upon the red-tape of a service which makes the Medical Department its very last consideration!"

Leaving the Hospital, Hilton hurried back to the docks,

directed his luggage into a "quilez," and was soon rattling along Calle Real *en route* to the Quarantine Camp.

Perhaps a third of the way out to Jaro a twist in the white, dusty trail enables it to avoid the edge of a graceful growth of palms which here fills in the country lying between the road and the beach of Iloilo Strait. Here, in the gathering lateral shadows of the late afternoon, Hilton found the white tents of the Isolation Camp scattered beneath the trees. A sentry sharply halted his rig, and vigilantly watched the unloading of the doctor's slim outfit, but the sight of the cross on the physician's collar reassured him, and Hilton, returning his salute, paid off his "cochero" and walked eagerly into the aisles of his strange out-door hospital. The surf of the Jolo Sea was sounding in his ears from the westward, and he gave thanks for that health-giving sound. Guided by a red-cross flag flying from one of the larger tents, he soon found himself within the headquarters, which turned out to be simply a pavilion raised above a board floor. A group of Filipino and Chinese "immunes" were lounging at its entrance, and two of these he sent back for his luggage. Within, the only occupants were a worn-looking steward who was presiding at a make-shift dispensary, and an infantry-man on guard over a huge pile of medical and quartermaster supplies.

A few minutes' conversation with the weary steward gave him the essentials of his new duties. He found that there were about ninety cases in the Camp at present. They were mainly Visayans, and there was but one American, the missionary from Binalogan. New cases were brought in daily from the north, and the daily death-rate averaged a good fifteen per cent. It had been impossible hitherto to detail a regular physician, for the staff were all busy fighting the plague in the "barrios" or using preventive measures in the larger towns. With one assistant, the steward had been given the entire responsibility of the camp, and

professed himself heartily glad that his superior had arrived to assume a hopeless task. As to the American, he would find him isolated in a special tent at the northern edge of the grove, and not more than a hundred and fifty feet from the Jaro road.

Requesting the steward to retain his responsibilities for another half-hour, Hilton hurried away through the apathetic immunes, and with some difficulty succeeded in finding the tent in which his old commander had been placed. Decently by itself it was, and raised from the damp ground by a rude bamboo flooring, but, in spite of these and other evidences of special care, the sight of the dilapidated canvas tilted in the shadow of a mighty palm was mournful indeed to the eyes of the approaching officer. Instinctively he thought of the fine old Michigan home where he had first met Herbert Heart, with its broad porches, and its shaded lawn ablaze with scarlet maples. Had his friend been brought by the mysteries of Providence from such a starting-post to so pitiable a goal as this infected, shaky shelter?

Made fearless by his love and pity, he raised the flap, and, stepping within, looked down upon the face of his friend. The sick man was not alone; a convalescent Visayan from Marotac was faithfully fanning the flies from the cot of his beloved "padre," and looked up almost resentfully at the intruder. But Hilton hardly saw the attendant—his eyes were glued to the awful apparition upon the bed. He could not doubt that he in reality beheld the man whom he loved above all others, but there was not a line in the countenance before him which suggested it. The patient was apparently in the usual dead stupor which marks the second period of the disease, and the closed eyes left the distorted face without a single guide to recognition. The natural clearness of the skin had given place to a mottled purple, both upon the face and the one exposed arm, and the regu-

lar features were lost in an offensive and grotesque puffiness. So awful was the change that for an instant Hilton was tempted to deny the identity. But stooping over, he found the unerring evidence of the bolo scar across the cheek, and straightened himself back against the tent-pole with a poorly suppressed groan of agony. Could this loathsome thing be the same man whom he had last beheld clean and sound, the man who had companioned with him in a hundred stirring adventures? Could this puffed, vacuous, mottled face be identical with the clear-eyed, finely chiseled countenance of the dashing Herbert Heart of Santiago and Porto Rico, of Zapoté Bridge and Ignotan? So surely as there was a just God above, he cried within himself, he must awake to find the wretchedness and horror before him dissipated, and his comrade restored to him in cleanliness and strength, hand clasping hand beneath the oaks of the old college campus or the maples of the old home. But the smell of the disinfectants, the fetid atmosphere of the place, and the unconscious horror before him mocked his hope, and he brought himself together with an effort. Giving some directions to the attendant, he looked searchingly at his patient, and then returned to headquarters. The purplish spots on the neck and cheeks of the missionary had told him, all too plainly, that the case was hopeless, and the final collapse not far distant, and his first act was to telephone this to Major Carter, requesting him to send word to Dr. Duval, who, the steward said, had appeared at the sentry line inquiring for his colleague just previous to the arrival of Hilton.

This done, he gloomily turned to the details of his administration, receiving reports from and giving instructions to the stewards, nurses, guards and bearers. He then took pains to send an additional Visayan to Heart's tent, so that word might be instantly brought him should the patient become conscious, and thus, having assured himself of a con-

versation with Heart at the earliest possible moment, repaired to his own private tent pitched directly beside the headquarters' pavilion. As he did so he turned to the sergeant of the guard, who was approaching with the reserve.

"You are to be hereafter unswervingly rigid, sergeant, in the observance of the exclusion order. No one must cross the line, unless a patient or an immune."

It was now seven o'clock, and his supper was brought to him by a Chinese servant. By the time he had disposed of it and had arranged his few effects, it was time for the final inspection of the camp. Fearless as only the true devotee of faith or the absorbed apostle of modern science can become, the physician made the rounds of the mournful encampment, suggesting a change here and there, and endeavoring to create good cheer and optimism by kindly words of encouragement to the patients. But, brave as he was, he shuddered as a group of bearers carried out a spotted corpse from a tent under his direction. The dark skin of the victim mottled with the plague showed up hideously in the light of the hospital lantern in his assistant's hand. He stood as though rooted to the path, looking scowlingly after the disappearing shadows of the little cortege, and thinking of the impotence of curative science in the presence of "The Black Death."

He was so shaken with a sudden feeling of helplessness that he feared his assistant would notice his uncertainty, and he saw with relief a native appear at his elbow with a message for him.

"The 'Americano' is now conscious, señor," said the man in Spanish.

Instantly leaving his steward to continue the inspection alone, Hilton made hurriedly through the rows of tents to the darkness of the palms at the northern edge, and, guided by a light in the isolated tent, he soon threw open its flap and met the open, alert eyes of his former Captain. The

patient's face was even more awful in the flickering light of a windblown candle, but the dark eyes proclaimed the reality of the soul's return, and for an instant the patient and the physician stared at each other as though mutually affrighted, neither daring to speak.

At length a peculiar change flashed over the face of the man upon the couch, and he made a feeble attempt to rise upon his elbow, his mouth moving but no sound issuing forth. Then came a single husky word, infinitely weak and uncertain, but nevertheless a word of glad welcome and gratitude.

"Jim!"

Hilton had fallen upon his knees beside the cot, the tears running down his tanned face. He reached out for Heart's hand, but the missionary drew himself feebly away.

"Water! Jim, water! and if you love me don't touch me!"

The Visayan attendant pressed a glass of water to the dry lips, and put his arm under the aching head to raise it. Gulping painfully, the patient swallowed, nodded in thankfulness, and sank back, his face twisting with pain, upon the rude pillow.

"That's better, much better. Thank you, Anselmo," he said presently, his voice still weak, but cleared of its huskiness. "And now, Jim, explain yourself. Sit back away from the cot, or else I won't talk with you, and remember that blubbering spoils your looks, old man. Tell me what you are doing here. The sight of you has startled me up into the seventh heaven."

Hilton moved back a jealous half-step and seated himself upon a camp-stool, the unashamed tears still showing on his face. He mechanically wiped his glasses before he trusted himself to speak.

"The old battalion was ordered back to Manila from Guam. The other two battalions went on to the States. Major Carter sent up to the Surgeon-General for volun-

teers, and I came on down here. I'm in charge here now, Herbert."

For an instant Hilton had debated whether or not he should inform Heart that the old battalion was on the way to Iloilo. He decided in the negative. If they should not come in time it might grieve the dying man, and if they did arrive in time, the surprise might act as a reprieving tonic to him.

"It's glorious to see you again," said the sufferer with a deep sigh of relief and content. "I don't want you to feel badly about me, Jim. I've lived to the limit the few months since I saw you last. I am not going to meet my God without having had a little taste of his service here in this old world, and knowing something of its blessedness."

Here a violent retching interrupted him. Turning away from the doctor, who arose and bent anxiously over him, Heart motioned to the Visayan, who appeared with a towel and gently wiped a bloody ooze from the missionary's lips. In a moment the sufferer was quiet again.

"I'll leave you if you exert yourself to speak again, Herbert," said the doctor, trying to make his voice firm. "Here, take this tablet. Raise his head, 'hombre.'"

Willingly enough Heart swallowed the tablet, although with some difficulty, and patiently sipped at the glass of water which followed. Then, relaxing, he said quietly:

"Please don't go, Jim. I must say a few words to you. Humor me, old boy. My heart is full, and I must speak."

"Go ahead then, Herbert, but please don't strain yourself. Take it easy. I—I won't leave you, whatever you do."

"Good for you! You always did let me have my way, even in the dear old college days." Heart tried to smile. "Well, what I want to say most of all is a little word of witness to my—my Master, Jesus Christ. I'm afraid that after I am gone—now *don't* interrupt me, please—that after I'm gone some of my old friends may be tempted to think that I've

had a hard time since I left the battalion. I want you to tell them for me, Jim, that the little time I've spent in the service of the Kingdom of God has been a wonderfully happy time to me. I don't think I ever really lived before. You won't forget that, will you, old chum?"

"Sure, I won't forget," said Hilton gruffly. "But don't think you are a real doctor just because you fooled the people of Binalogan into thinking you were a genuine 'medico.' Why, you have a mighty good chance for life yet."

There was a moment of silence. The Visayan, squatting quietly at the other side of the bed, wistfully regarded the sick man's face. At length Heart cleared his throat feebly, and said:

"Your very first lie, Jim. But love created it. God bless you, old faithful, God bless you!"

A moment later the two watchers saw the eyelids flutter shut, quenching the brave glow of the dark eyes, which to the last looked lovingly at the doctor. The muscles of the face relaxed slightly, and once more the patient was unconscious of all about him, his hideous face, unrelieved by the flash of intelligence showing increasingly grotesque as the candle-light and the shadows played alternately upon it.

XXIII

SONGS FROM THE PICKET LINE



NIGHT and a day of unconsciousness. And while Heart was slowly approaching the gates of the eternal world various things of earthly importance to him occurred one after the other. First had come, in the early morning after Hilton's conversation with the failing missionary, a furious ringing of the telephone bell in the Quarantine pavilion. It was Dr. Duval, pleading with Hilton to be taken on to the medical staff of the camp that he might be permitted to minister to his dying colleague, and the younger officer found many denials necessary. The inexorable Carter had repeatedly refused Duval the day before. There was no excuse for risking a spread of the contagion, he said, and there were other reasons for the refusal which he did not feel at liberty to give.

Then, at nine o'clock, the cable offices had flashed the patient's serious condition to Manila and home *via* Hong Kong, London, and New York.

And at noon the stately white hull of the *Warren* swept into the Strait of Iloilo, and busy lighters, clinging to its sides, took off huge loads of jaunty boys in "khaki," who chatted familiarly with the "cargadores" and sniffed about the sugar wharves as though they enjoyed the old odors.

Hardly had the first consignment of them touched the dock at half-past three, when certain of their officers were working the wire like mad, demanding news of their erstwhile comrade, Herbert Heart, of whose heroism and desperate illness the Manila papers had reluctantly told. One after another, Chaplain Winfield Scott Tully, now healthy-skinned and vigorous, lithe "Monty" Smith, now wearing a captain's bars, and nervous little Adjutant Marchant stood at the receiver and talked vigorously and to the point. When they had hung up and faced each other there was quite a group in the Q.M.D. office.

"What's the latest about old Heart?" asked a voice back toward the door. It came from long Tom Kittredge, who had served side by side with Heart in the humid heat of Cuba.

In response to the question, Marchant opened his mouth and cursed the universe in general and the Medical Department of the Visayas in particular, while the tears trickled down his sea-tanned cheeks.

"A lot of dirty incompetents!" he said brokenly. "They didn't know enough to handle their little epidemic themselves, and had to let a line officer do it for 'em. *They* thought it was typhus-fever! Boys, Heart is dying of bubonic at the Quarantine Camp. He caught it while helping at Binalogan."

"Who said so?" asked an awed voice.

The Chaplain answered.

"We've just been talking with Hilton. He's in charge at the camp since yesterday. I'm going out at once. They'll let me pass that sentry-line or I'll know the reason why."

"Wait till I get the Major to release me and I'll go along with you," pleaded Monty. "I'm supposed to be in charge of this accursed dock."

The Chaplain was already elbowing his way out toward a waiting group of native rigs.

"Stay where you are, Captain," he said sharply. "It will do you no good to go to the Camp. They'll not let you pass. I'll 'phone down here to you as soon as I see him."

He sprang into a "quilez" as the last words left his mouth, and twenty minutes later had successfully bulldozed the doubtful outpost on the Jaro road into letting him pass into Hilton's quarters.

"But my orders allow of no exceptions," the hastily summoned sergeant of the guard had said.

"I'm not an exception, I'm the Rule," said the Chaplain, with an insolence born of love for his dying friend. "And, by the way, Sergeant Murphy, I should think you would be ashamed to challenge a minister of the gospel at a place like this. The sign on my shoulder should have been enough for you."

Still doubtful, the sergeant had nevertheless allowed him to pass in to an anxious conversation with Hilton. Shortly after both men stood over the missionary, whose lips now moved in soft-spoken, incoherent sentences, while his eyes, although open, stared unseeing at the roof of his tent.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the Fifty-fifth came up pretty strong this evening," said Tully softly. "What shall we do? We can't allow the boys in here, and yet if Monty is held at the line he'll go clean crazy. And Heart can't last through the night."

"I'll instruct the sergeant to call me if they come. I think that if we make it a point of honor with them they'll not force the outpost. You stay here until six, and then report at my tent for supper. We ought to—to *both*—be here with him—to-night."

Hilton had tried to speak evenly, but his voice shook.

"I don't care for any supper to-night, Doctor," answered the Chaplain. "I'll stay right here if you will let me."

So Hilton went gloomily back to his duties, and the griz-

zled Tully watched through the afternoon hours over his delirious friend.

At seven o'clock an evening zephyr swept out of the Jolo Sea, and sighed through the mournful grove, and, gradually growing to a steady breeze, cleared the darkening skies overhead of their few remaining cob-webs of filmy cloud, allowing the Southern Cross and all its lesser satellites to throw their soft light through the fronded, swaying tops above the encampment. The whole place seemed suddenly enchanted into a veritable cradle of God, the squalid details of the poorly pitched tents turning into an alluring pattern of silver and ebony. The smell of disinfectants drifted away eastward, and the health of the salt sea seemed eddying in gentle helpfulness through every loathsome abode, causing many a stolid Visayan to stir with hope of a better morrow. The sultriness of the day had sadly depressed the victims, and now it seemed as though the calm angels of God were watching over them through the starry eyes gleaming in the velvety sky, and as though the very hand of Omnipotent Mercy was cooking their aching bodies with a pressure of soothing love.

Whether in response to the call of the reviving encampment, or in consequence of the gentle flapping of the curtain of his tent, Heart again came back to his surroundings, and looked up into the faces of his attendant and the Chaplain. A single candle had been lit, and his first words, quiet and clear, were:

"Please put out the light, Anselmo, I want to see the stars. Is that you, Jim? Would you mind throwing back the tent door?"

The light went out, its wick pinched between Anselmo's brown fingers, and Tully, arising, threw open the flap and fastened it back, letting in the ethereal softness of the starlight upon the missionary's cot. Then, coming back to the bedside and resuming his stool, he said quietly,

"It isn't Hilton, it's Tully. You remember worthless old Chaplain Tully, Heart."

Had the dim light permitted, Tully would have seen a look of gladness make iridescent the eyes of the patient.

"Dear Chaplain!" he said happily. "This is my second miracle. God is good to me!"

He lay quietly for a moment, evidently formulating some query to put to Tully, and then, turning his head slightly, was about to speak, when Hilton came in, and, seeing him conscious, gave him a greeting of forced cheerfulness.

"How is it to-night, old man? Feeling a little easier?"

"Much easier," responded Heart.

"Don't you want a light?"

"No, thanks, Jim; I want the stars to-night. God's candles, you know, set for our faith and our passing."

Hilton did not trust himself to answer, and in the moment of stillness which followed the breeze outside stirred the great thatch of palm leaves above the tent into a mystic beckoning of myriad hands. Then, almost imperceptibly the breeze changed its rustling into a higher key, and little by little made itself articulate in actual words. At first the listeners thought themselves deluded, but a moment later an unmistakable quartette of male voices came down the night air to them, growing clearer and clearer until, as the chorus was reached, the quartette blended into a swelling chant of many voices.

Oh say, does the star-spangled banner still wave

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

"What—what is it, Chaplain?" asked Heart, his voice weak, but tense with a great eagerness. He half-raised himself as he spoke.

"Don't get excited, Heart. It's just the old company. They came down to-day from Manila."

The officer had spoken very tenderly.

"Company I? But what are they doing in the Quarantine Camp?" Heart demanded, unbelieving.

"They aren't in the Camp, Herbert. They are out in the road. They came up from the barracks to sing to you."

As Tully spoke the quartette began again, the tenor singing as he was never to sing again, thrilling his sentences into the grove from the road, where he stood with a hundred awed men around him. As he reached the line—

Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation—
Heart's mind cleared as cleanly as the night sky above.

"That's Delaney's voice!" he cried. "It is the old company quartette. Raise me up, Anselmo. Keep away, you two. Don't touch me. Anselmo can do it. *There!* Isn't it glorious? Help the chorus out, comrades. I—I can't, you know."

Propped in his bed by the Visayan, with his eyes on the starry sky, the indomitable spirit within the decaying body jerked the hand to a salute, and held it rigidly to his forehead until the chorus was ended, the dry lips moving in unison with the broken words of the Chaplain and the Doctor as they tried to join the refrain:

And the star spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

As the last measure died away into the wind Heart's hand fell.

"Give them my love. It was great of them to think of doing it," he said huskily. "It just fitted the night somehow."

Again silence came. The watchers under the canvas felt that the momentary excitement of their patient had, if anything, brought him nearer to the inevitable end. Instinctively they drew closer to the man they both ardently loved.

Shortly, however, Heart stirred again uneasily. His lips moved once or twice, but his increasing weakness was too great for speech. Anselmo moistened his lips in vain. A look of fear, of struggle, showed in the missionary's eyes. The Chaplain thought he understood.

"What is it, Herbert?" he asked, bending close to his ear.
"Your mother?"

Heart slowly shook his head.

"He left messages for his mother with Dr. Duval," explained Hilton in a whisper to Tully.

The battle in the eyes of the dying man suddenly gave place to so victorious a glow that even in the dim radiance of the stars the watchers noticed the change. Once more the spirit had triumphed for the instant. But the voice, when it came, was very faint. The two friends listened breathlessly for the words.

"Grace," whispered the voice. "She is out in the road, and I fear she is weeping. Hold her at the line, Dr. Jim. Don't let her in here, will you, dear old man? And, listen, Tully. When I'm gone tell her that it was just the same with me up to the very last. Tell her that it always—"

Voices were again coming down the night breeze, but this time a soprano was leading—a voice the dying man had last heard on the old Carlist path on Corregidor. There were tears in the voice, but it rose like a nightingale's, and, true to its inspired intent, sang its every word distinctly to the tent beneath the palms. For a few quivering notes it soared alone, and then was suddenly supported by the entire company at the picket-line. A delegation of native Protestants had come silently up the Jaro road, and were massed with the grieving soldiers. They joined in the well-known tune in words of their own dialect, and like a pæan of triumph it came through the star-lit arches:

*The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain,
His blood-red banner streams afar—
Who follows in his train?*

*Who best can drink his cup of woe,
And triumph over pain,
Who patient bears his cross below—
He follows in his train!*

*A glorious band, the chosen few
On whom the Spirit came;
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,
And mocked the cross and flame:
They climbed the steep ascent to heaven,
Through peril, toil and pain:
Oh God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.*

"Amen," said Heart softly, and then was so quiet, so rigid, that they thought he had passed. But he spoke once more.

"Dear Grace! Don't —let—her—grieve. Don't—let anybody grieve. Let's all be very happy about it. It's—a—glorious—promotion. His servants shall see his face, and they shall serve him day and night before—before the—throne—of—God—forever."

Down from the picket-line came a strain which Hilton could not find it in his heart to smother with evil tidings. This time the soprano was lacking, but all the rest were singing, Filipino and American, Monty Smith, Dr. Duval, Adjutant Marchant, old Domingo, little Billy Ludlow, and a good three hundred more, and as the song throbbed plaintively out into the night a little woman in white, close at her brother's side, raised her eyes to the constellation of the Cross, and echoed in her heart what she could not utter for her tears—

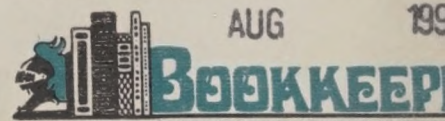
OR IF, ON JOYFUL WING,
CLEAVING THE SKY,
SUN, MOON AND STARS FORGOT,
UPWARD I FLY,
STILL ALL MY SONG SHALL BE,
NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE,
NEARER—TO—THEE.

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